

Plan to split ILEA comes under heavy fire

by John O'Leary

Proposals to break up the Inner London Education Authority met a solid wall of opposition this week as polytechnic directors, local government officers, unions and the councillors themselves made their stand.

The Baker report, produced by a group of London Conservatives at the request of Mr Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education, was attacked as inaccurate and misleading. Its recommendation to split further and higher education and administer the five Inner London polytechnics through a joint education committee of the 12 boroughs was condemned as costly and inefficient.

A barrage of criticism of the report culminated today with the

release of a letter from the directors and chairmen of the five polytechnics to the Prime Minister and Mr Carlisle. In a draft of their statement they describe the plan as "ill-conceived and illogical" and warn against its implementation.

The directors and chairmen at the City, North London, South Bank, Thames and Central London polytechnics are unanimous in their opposition to administration through a joint committee. The two neighbouring institutions which already operate under this system—Middlesex and North East London polytechnics—have had to contend with arbitrary and irrational decisions because of disagreements between the constituent authorities, they say.

Although the five institutions have had occasional differences with the ILEA, the letter says, there has always been a consistent and under-

standable policy. The five hope that discussions currently under way will lead eventually to national control but favour the continuation of their relationship with the ILEA for the present.

Mr Peter Newsam, education officer of the ILEA, also publicly criticized the proposed arrangement for further and higher education in a commentary on the Baker report endorsed by the authority on Tuesday.

He claims that a joint committee with its own officers would be more expensive than the present system, whereas one serviced by their primary responsibilities and loyalties. Inner London would be the only area of the country where further and higher education were handled by different authorities, he says.

At a five-hour meeting of the ILEA, Conservative councillors moved an amendment welcoming the Baker report but this was defeated by 34 votes to 18. Mr Ellis Hillman, chairman of the authority's further and higher education subcommittee, described the report as ill-informed on post-school provision.

He pointed out that the report makes no mention of three of the ILEA's colleges—Avery Hill and Garnett colleges and the Central School of Art and Design.

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education warned that the omission suggested the Conservatives wanted to close the three colleges down. Education secretary Jane Reed said it was "inconceivable" the colleges had been ignored.

University print shop first to go

by Ngau Crequer

Southampton University was the first university to face a redundancy exercise, after a faculty committee recommended the university's Central Printing Unit be closed down no later than 1980, that existing equipment sold and that staff be redeployed or made redundant.

Unless there is a change of mind and discussions are still on, it is likely that seven staff, four typists, members of National and Local Government Officers' Association, will be made redundant.

The print manager, a member of the Association of University Printers, may also lose his job. He is on a three-year short-term contract. He was brought in specifically to revitalize the unit.

Since the initial recommendation for closure, a working party set up to examine the unit and to consult with the staff, has been busy. A final decision will be made by a faculty committee on March 14.

The CPU prints university notices and departmental correspondence. Its estimated net deficit in 1979 was £16,000 but its print manager has calculated the unit was re-equipped at £40,000 and spent on it £10,000.

Both NALGO and the APU are annoyed at the way the unit has been handled. The unit has taken legal advice and that the university was in breach of its statutory duty under the employment protection act.

Although disaffiliation motions are still on the agenda at Kent, Exeter, Newcastle, Aston and University College London, the NUS president, Mr Trevor Phillips, who spoke in the debates at Nottingham and Durham, is in a buoyant mood.

"Whatever we have been able to do, the arguments and allegations put forward by the NUS, we have been very successful in the votes", he said.

Some NUS officers have described the wave of disaffiliation moves as a "minor right-wing" plot. They have been particularly incensed by a leaflet headed "40 reasons to leave NUS" which is circulated on campuses.

It alleges that the union is on record as being opposed to the IRA and other "freedom fighters" and is known for wasting funds on bureaucracy. Mr Phillips describes the leaflet as "a slender sheet and pack of lies".

He says the campaign is no more than a move by right-wingers within the Federation of Conservative Students to wrest back control of the organization as against FCS policy is to work within NUS to democratize the union.

Mr Brian Mottishaw, the Scottish chairman of FCS, denied that any organized campaign was being run. He said he was helping with some central publicity although a leaflet had been produced at Harriott-Watt University, independently.

The Freedom Association said it was not directly involved in the recent campaign, although it supported voluntary membership of the NUS.

Blue films inquiry

A report on a film show which included a blue movie shown to students at Aston University is to be sent by police to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The university is also conducting its own internal inquiry into the incident, chaired by Professor Malcolm Holmes, head of the civil engineering department, which expects to report next week.

The film, called "Jolly Hockey Sticks" was part of a series of lectures on human relationships in a course run by lecturer Dr Philip Calhoun. The course, called "Know Thyself", was part of a series of lectures on human relationships in a course run by lecturer Dr Philip Calhoun.

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Higher Education SUPPLEMENT

March 14, 1980 No 386

Authorities plan fairer share-out

by Peter David

British local education authorities are pressing rapidly ahead with plans to set up a national committee which will advise the Secretary of State on the distribution of some £400m a year to polytechnics and colleges.

At a meeting yesterday of the Council of Local Education Authorities, members were told that the creation of an advisory body was essential to avert a repetition of this year's crisis in polytechnic and college budgets.

Local government officers explained their plans to DES officials last week, and councillors will hold a parallel meeting later this month. Dr Rhodes Boyson, under secretary for higher education, an advisory committee could be established this year to preside over the distribution of funds from the Advanced Further Education pool in 1981-82.

The speed with which the local authorities are moving is an indication of the anger of some of their members at the inequitable share-out of funds from the cash limited pool. Figures from the DES show that while some authorities received 37.9 per cent less than they wanted, others had their budgets cut by as little as 0.7 per cent.

A DES study group under Mr Stephen Jones is already examining factors behind the distribution of funds, but local authority members are firmly against adopting the main proposal, which is for funding polytechnics by applying rigid average costs.

Their view is that although unit costs could be a guide to the distribution of funds, any attempt to impose the arbitrary formula applied this year would entail educational and political as well as financial judgments, which could be made by the local committees.

Mr Jones has already been told that the distribution of funds is a matter of political judgment, and that the arbitrary formula applied this year would entail educational and political as well as financial judgments, which could be made by the local committees.

It would be economic to close the unit. The unit is a highly questionable one, and it is really a case of the union being the master of the house. This is the first time that it is actively going to be dismantled and I have heard that the only university which is printing unit if this goes ahead will be more than £100,000.

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Police harass philosopher

Leeds University's philosophy subject is to continue to sponsor private lectures to a group of Leeds students who meet in the town under Dr Julius Tomin. The Tomin is a philosopher who has been holding unofficial seminars for three years, and is now being harassed and harassed by security police to leave the country.

Dr Tomin, who defended the Government's decision in evidence last week, was interrupted by a group of students and arrested by William Norrish, a Leeds teacher of philosophy at Leeds University. The course, called "Know Thyself", was part of a series of lectures on human relationships in a course run by lecturer Dr Philip Calhoun.

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Lecturers are overpaid says Clegg evidence

by David Jobbins

Polytechnic and college lecturers are overpaid in comparison with employees in industry, commerce and the rest of the public sector, confidential studies carried out for the Clegg Commission on pay suggest.

Surveys compiled by Clegg staff indicate that some should be paid 24 per cent less.

This early data, which includes exercises carried out for the commission by Inbucon, the management consultants, shows that while most schoolteachers deserve pay increases, only college staff on principal and vice-principal grades are comparatively underpaid.

Dismissing the findings as nonsense, Mr Peter Dawson, general secretary of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, said: "It must be obvious to everyone that this exercise has not worked." It is the first time that Naffie leaders have broken the code of confidentiality.

Professor Clegg has been supplied with six surveys, on the ranking orders of jobs. Two have been specially drawn up for Inbucon over the past months by judging panels comprising management, teachers' representatives and independent experts. The first survey is a comparison of lecturers' earnings and the salaries of non-teachers. The second excludes public sector occupations from the rank orders.

Survey Three is an Inbucon comparison with United Kingdom civil servants. Number Four used a British Institute of Management Survey, while Numbers Five and Six used the Office Salaries Analysis drawn

	median pay	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Survey 5	Survey 6
Principals	12,812	15,770	25.1	16,080	24.9	17,117	33.6
Deputy principals	12,127	15,400	24.1	15,400	24.1	16,184	34.9
Heads of Dept.	9,702	8,766	-9.6	8,073	-16.8	8,522	-12.2
Senior Lecturer	7,701	7,212	-6.3	7,149	-7.2	7,759	0.8
Lecturer II	6,874	8,500	10.4	8,500	10.4	8,322	8.1
Lecturer I	5,814	6,956	12.2	6,970	12.2	6,285	-8.3
		5,430	-6.6	5,585	-3.9	6,285	8.1

than purely financial or educational, he said: "I can only listen with interest to what you say within the present convention."

Mr Kevin McNamara, chairman of the sub-committee, after the meeting accused the witnesses of hiding behind the convention on confidentiality on every possible occasion. Regardless of judgments on the political advisability of decisions, he said, the process of arriving at a decision was a matter of legitimate interest.

"If there is going to be a persistent insistence on this line of policy, then the new select committees are going to be thwarted in their efforts to assess the quality of advice being given to ministers and the decisions being taken," said Mr McNamara.

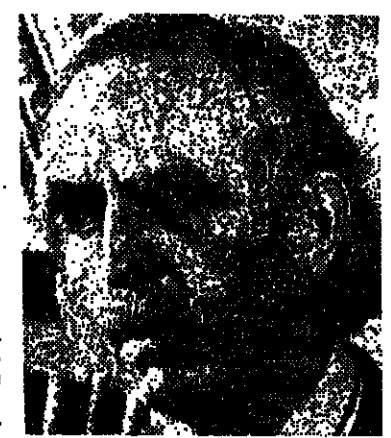
In a letter to Mr McNamara, Mr Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education, said that since the collective one made as part of the Government's public expenditure plans, the sub-committee could not expect to receive information about the advice given to Ministers by officials or the processes through which a particular decision was reached.

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Professor Clegg: crude data

up for the Institute of Administrative Management. The table shows the adjustment to median salaries in each grade necessary to bring lecturers into line with the comparators.

Lecturers on the lowest scales fare worst with only one of the Inbucon-based surveys suggesting even a modest increase and calculations of over-payment ranging as high as 27 per cent. It is only at principal and vice-principal levels that pay places are dominated by the teachers.

According to Mr Dawson, there are a number of technical reasons for the failure of the exercise to come up with useful data. A crucial one is the use of median salaries meeting figures for the schools. But in the colleges, where many lecturers are concentrated towards the top of the scales, median pay is also near the top and only a

minute increase is needed to adjust it to an external comparator. One of the jobs was also incorrectly described — producing a dramatic effect on such a small sample.

Mr Dawson accused management representatives on the judging panel. Repeating his accusation — which they have denied — of block voting during the "thickening up" exercise earlier this year, he suggested this had distorted the rank orders against the interests of lecturers.

"We will expect Professor Clegg to produce a report which has regard to the realities of the position — not to a set of figures, which in this case are derived from one part of the exercise," Mr Dawson said.

Hopes are now pinned on Professor Clegg and his staff reprocessing the data to overcome union objections, which were put to him at a frank meeting this week. At that meeting Professor Clegg emphasized that the data was crude, and that it formed only a part of his commission's work in establishing what lecturers should be paid.

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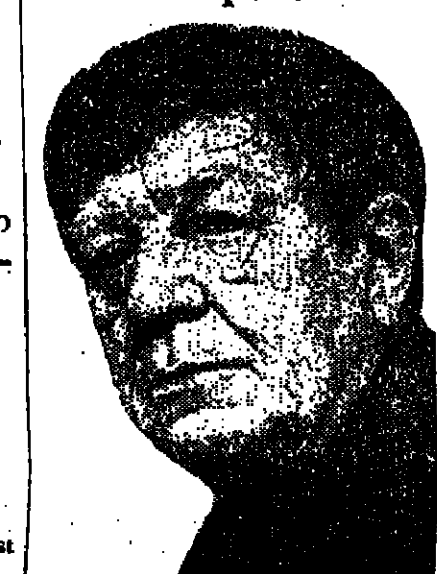
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Principals to get new discipline code

by David Jobbins

New guidelines for college principals faced with handling disciplinary action against fellow trade union members of their staff are to be drawn up.

Leaders of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education are to prepare the new code following a discussion at the union's national council of the case of sacked West Ham College lecturer Mr John Regan.

Mr Regan was suspended by his principal, NATFHE national executive member Mr Eric Williams, for refusing to complete student report forms and declining to be interviewed in the principal's office. He was later dismissed by Newham Education Authority.

The findings of an industrial tribunal which heard a claim from Mr Regan that he was unfairly dismissed are awaited.

Mr Regan was refusing to fill in the forms, introduced when the

system of student assessment was revised at West Ham, as part of the campaign for a merger between the two lower pay grades for lecturers. The new guidelines will be submitted to the next national council in July for amendment and/or approval.

The union council called on the executive to sack Mr Regan's predecessor. It also "noted" a confidential report by a committee chaired by Sir Edward Britton, senior research fellow in education at Sheffield University, which was asked by the executive to inquire into the affair.

The inquiry found "some what regretfully" that Mr Williams had no option but to suspend Mr Regan, but described the final verdict of dismissal as harsh.

Its members felt considerable sympathy for Mr Regan's predicament, but had difficulty in seriously faulting Mr Williams' conduct—except perhaps for the speed with which he suspended the lecturer.

On the issue of actions at national executive and head office level the inquiry says: "We found no evidence that the association had been remiss in any way in its defence of Mr Regan or in its attitudes to the case."

Every effort was made to make sure Mr Williams' dual role did not influence the executive's discussions and actions, the report says. Mr Williams withdrew from executive meetings when the West Ham affair was debated.

The committee made a number of recommendations, which were put to national council by the executive and noted. They cover a review of standing orders of union bodies down to branch level to ensure they meet real needs; the keeping of proper branch minute books; wider publicity to the principle that members whose tenure is at risk have absolute priority for union support; and the advice given to branch officers on procedures for meetings.

Because the executive put forward a motion asking council simply to note the inquiry report, it avoided the embarrassing issue of a vote on motions submitted by a number of regions calling for its rejection.

One issue not discussed in the relatively short debate on the affair was whether college principals and vice-principals should be members of the union.

This year's annual conference in Scarborough is due to discuss a move to change the rules and bar college principals and vice-principals from membership of NATFHE. Conference is also expected to debate a call for the costs of Mr Regan's industrial tribunal action—about £600—to be paid by the union.

A hearing into allegations that the union's disciplinary code by handing out leaflets claiming that Mr Williams had been dismissed this weekend, may now be postponed because of the illness of one of the people complained against.

Employers' divided loyalties

by Patricia Santinelli

A warning that greater efforts be made to maintain the balance between education and employment representatives at Business Education Council meetings has come from Mr J. M. Bruce Loch, its chair.

Mr Loch says in the council's annual report that although the BEC board and committees are first loyal to the firm, inevitably they must also be loyal to the education sector in the majority of meetings.

"The council must always ensure that the employer's view does not fade," Mr Loch says. In the first three years of the council we showed an awareness of the practical problems of education, vested interests and which may one day erode away of purpose."

Mr Loch admitted the council had after careful consideration abandoned its planned major role into the cost and effectiveness of business education.

"Many of the factors are quantifiable and we had to about its cost-effectiveness of usefulness. However, should Government want such a study would cooperate," Mr Loch said.

One exercise in improving efficiency has been a monitoring programme based at Leeds Polytechnic where a database is being set up to store details on registration of BEC students, together with notes of their in-course assessments. It is also intended to follow a sample of students to see how they progress through their careers.

Mr Loch also warned of the impact of new technology on a complex change of policy on secretarial studies.

The report shows that 500 leavers are now running the BEC awards which were offered for the first time in 1978-79 indicate 12,000 out of nearly 14,000 students completed their course examinations and of those 11% or 81 per cent obtained a pass credit.

Principals launch poly counter-attack

by John O'Leary

College principals have accused the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) of seeking to close the colleges and institutes of higher education. They believe the directors want their sector abolished and its work taken over by the polytechnics.

Now, in an attempt to safeguard their future and promote the development of their own sector, the principals have decided to launch a counter-attack.

The official report of the principals' annual general meeting says that a Standing Conference would more vigorously protest the case for the support of the colleges and institutes of higher education during the next year and confront the polytechnic position which might be summarized as either the absorption of the colleges and institutes, or the separation of the surviving group from the local education authorities.

Ultimately, the Standing Conference wishes to see one group representing all the institutions of higher education working in parallel with the University Grants Committee and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. But all overtures to the CDP have been rebuffed and the new leadership of the principals appears to have decided on a tougher line.

Their first target will be the secretariat provided by the local authorities for the CDP. The principals are anxious to obtain similar arrangements for their own group, and are arranging a meeting with the Council of Local Education Authorities to put their case.

Mr Neil Morritt, director of Ealing College and the new chairman of the Standing Conference, said this week that the polytechnic directors' independence from the local authorities highlighted the anomaly of the present distinction in servicing the two groups.

"It seems to me an act of absolute lunacy for the local authorities to continue to fund the CDP under the present circumstances," Mr Morritt said. "It is rather like paying your own executioner."

He added that he hoped the apparent antagonism towards the colleges and institutes demonstrated by the CDP would prove to be a sector of higher education working in parallel with the University Grants Committee and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. But all overtures to the CDP

Overseas students cite declaration

by Paul Flather

Overseas students are turning to the Lusaka Declaration on racism and racial prejudice in a bid to continue their fight against higher education fees they will have to pay the next academic year.

The National Coordinating Committee of Overseas Students (NCCOS) has sent letters to all Commonwealth High Commissioners appealing for their support under the terms of the Declaration.

"The new charges are unjust and discriminatory and we aim to remind Commonwealth countries that they should be opposing them with us," said Mr K. K. Tan of NCCOS.

The Declaration signed at the Commonwealth conference in August 1979 affirms that there should be no discrimination based on race, colour, sex, descent or national or ethnic origin... in the economic, social or cultural fields, particularly education, health and employment.

Admitting that legislation alone cannot achieve this the Declaration continues: "We endorse the need to initiate public information and education policies designed to promote understanding, tolerance, respect and friendship among peoples and racial groups."

NCCOS, the smaller of two organizations which aims to represent the interests of overseas students in Britain, is also considering an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

Two weeks ago NCCOS organized a march and rally in Manchester attended by about 1,000 students in support of their "renowned" campaign.

"We feel great urgency to act now on this. If we wait now half of the normal overseas student population will have decided to study in America and other countries," said Mr Tan, who also backed recent demands from MPs to see a confidential report prepared by the civil service on the political consequences of raising the fees.

"Last term there were a series of occupations in support of our campaign. It is not easy to continue with this, but we want to make as much fuss as possible," he said.

Overseas students beginning courses this autumn will find it cheaper to study in Scotland than at public sector colleges south of the border. The 1980-81 fee levels for students starting degree courses at the Scottish central institutions and colleges of education will be £3,000 for laboratory based courses and £2,000 for classroom based ones, Mr George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, has announced.

The new overseas student fees planned by the Government for polytechnics and colleges in England and Wales from September are £3,300 and £2,400 respectively.

Senior staff and students at two more medical schools have joined the chorus of protest against the Flowers plan to reorganize London University's medical education system.

The Flowers report recommends that all medical education institutions in London be merged into six major schools. It also calls for the ending of Westminster medical school and the pre-clinical schools at the Royal Free Hospital and King's College.

This week the King's College principal, Sir Richard Wey, and his academic staff criticized the working party for lack of consultation with the college and accused it of making no attempt to assess the academic arguments for and against the teaching of medicine in a multi-

faculty environment like King's. The arguments for combining pre-clinical teaching there were fallacious and would lead to a considerable lowering of academic standards as it is considered axiomatic in universities that good teaching and research go hand in hand.

Furthermore, the chapter on financial implications in the Flowers report could not be taken seriously unless much more supporting evidence can be produced. The report picks millions of pounds of savings out of the air from all directions the King's College statement says.

Students of King's College union this week also criticized the working party for insufficient consultation and submitted questions which reflect the strength of feeling

among medical students in favour of pre-clinical courses being taught in a multi-faculty college.

Behaving the college's statement, they also pointed out that the cost of educating a medical student at King's College is considerably less than that of any other London medical course.

Earlier this week, women students from the Royal Free Hospital medical school, dressed as suffragettes, chained themselves to the railings outside Senate House to protest against their pre-clinical school's recommended closure. Their protest coincided with a meeting of the university's joint medical advisory committee, and was backed by all sections of the medical school staff and local branches of relevant unions.



Medical students mourn the death of the pre-clinical school at the Royal Free Hospital in a cuts protest.

Flowers 'could lead to lower medical standards'

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This week the King's College principal, Sir Richard Wey, and his academic staff criticized the working party for lack of consultation with the college and accused it of making no attempt to assess the academic arguments for and against the teaching of medicine in a multi-

faculty environment like King's. The arguments for combining pre-clinical teaching there were fallacious and would lead to a considerable lowering of academic standards as it is considered axiomatic in universities that good teaching and research go hand in hand.

Furthermore, the chapter on financial implications in the Flowers report could not be taken seriously unless much more supporting evidence can be produced. The report picks millions of pounds of savings out of the air from all directions the King's College statement says.

Students of King's College union this week also criticized the working party for insufficient consultation and submitted questions which reflect the strength of feeling

among medical students in favour of pre-clinical courses being taught in a multi-faculty college.

Behaving the college's statement, they also pointed out that the cost of educating a medical student at King's College is considerably less than that of any other London medical course.

Earlier this week, women students from the Royal Free Hospital medical school, dressed as suffragettes, chained themselves to the railings outside Senate House to protest against their pre-clinical school's recommended closure. Their protest coincided with a meeting of the university's joint medical advisory committee, and was backed by all sections of the medical school staff and local branches of relevant unions.

University makes nursery assistant redundant

by Ngalo Crequer

Sheffield University is to make a nursery assistant redundant and renegotiate the contracts of other staff to reduce the number of works worked in a year.

The move is part of a comprehensive package aimed at saving the nursery about £14,000 in a full year. The university eventually wants to phase out any subsidy towards nursery costs and has been unable to make any commitment about maintenance after this year.

Members of the National and Local Government Officers' Association at Sheffield will be calling a meeting within a week to consider what action to take. This Nalga branch had previously called for any necessary action to be taken against the nursery cuts.

The cuts have been made necessary because of guidance by the University Grants Committee that universities may not subsidize nurseries from their recurrent grant.

This week the university's resource committee accepted the proposals on the redundancy and other savings said these will now go to the finance committee and then a meeting of university council. Originally the proposal was that two members of staff would have to go, but one person has already given notice.

A spokesman for the university said: "This is a one-year emergency

plan. We do not think we can close the nursery, but we cannot give any commitment beyond the academic year."

Mr Paul Blomfield, Nalga branch secretary, said: "When the nursery was taken over by the university we were given an assurance that existing conditions would be maintained for existing staff."

"Now the university is saying this is not the case, which is different from what we were led to believe," he said.

Mr Steve Grabner, president of the students union, said that the proposals were a "reasonable compromise." But he was "disturbed by their statement that they are not prepared to consider funding it after one year. It means that every one who works in the nursery will not know what is going to happen."

Last weekend a National Union of Students conference pledged to develop the campaign against the nursery cuts by lobbying MPs and college governors. In the autumn the NUS will organize a joint conference with teaching and campus unions.

About 100 staff and students at York University have signed a petition to protest against two unfilled vacancies in the philosophy department. (According to the petition the staff-student ratio is now the worst in the university.)

Several advertised courses have had to be abandoned.



Polycad—a new computer graphics centre—opens at Middlesex Polytechnic on March 27. Housed at the Poly's Bounds Green site, it is based on a Prime 550 computer backed up with a large digital plotter, a large digitizer, display screen and several terminals. The core of the centre is the innovative Picaso computer graphics system which can draw two-dimensional shapes and creative views of three-dimensional objects.

Boyson considering student loans

Student loans is one subject now being investigated by the Government as part of a detailed examination of the financing of higher education.

Dr Rhodes Boyson, under secretary for higher education, said that in the present economic climate every alternative to cut expenditure would have to be looked at. About £350m a year is now set aside for student grants.

"All I can say is that we are preparing papers on the way colleges are financed and also on student loans. But nothing has been decided. It is a part of a normal long-term review."

Dr Boyson is known to favour at least a partial loan system under which the state would pay the fees and fund the maintenance elements of the grant. After last week's meeting with representatives of the National Union of Students, part of the Government's triennial review of higher education.

Dr Boyson expressed sympathy for demands to end means tests and discretionary grants. He is also considering a move to pay the different elements of the grant separately. The NUS has long argued that the rent element bears little relation to actual rents charged by colleges.

"I know this is deeply resented by many parents. And if 18 is the age of majority in our society, it is not correct to have means tests for people over that age."

But he described the NUS claim for a 36 per cent increase in student grants as "totally unrealistic." The Government's response, expected after the Budget, would depend on the inflation rate, the "fall-down" students experienced last year, and overall economic plans, he said.

"I appreciate sympathy does not pay bills, but at present it is obviously very difficult to meet these sorts of demand."

About 40,000 students marched in Glasgow and London last week in support of the claim for £51.25 a week (£63 in London). The march slogan written across 4,000 balloons released in Fleet Street, London, was: Stamp out stupidity: stop the education cuts.

Mr Clive Jenkins, general secretary of the Association of Technical and Manual Staff in Education, said that the education union had 3,000 students in London who were the human resources of Britain. He pledged support to an end to all discretionary cuts in "so that no fertile brains are lost to moulding," because of lack of funds.

Mr Neil Kinnock, Labour's education spokesman, denounced Government cuts at a rally attended by 4,000 students in Glasgow.

Six candidates are fighting the top post of president of the NUS, which will be decided at the annual conference in Blackpool next month.

Mr David Aaronovitch, current NUS national secretary, and backed by the Left Alliance, is expected to win. He faces opposition from: Anna Sweeney (Conservative), Roger (Socialist), Stuart Hepburn (Socialist), Student (Socialist), Keith Ibbotson (Independent), and Chris Hume-Smith (Liberal Independent).

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Union attacks Finniston plan

Opposition to fundamental aspects of the Finniston report is threatened by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

The educational implications of the report were discussed at the union's national council and concern expressed that the proposed engineering authority to oversee training and registration would be a "black box" for wider powers than any comparable body.

A resolution was passed attacking some of the proposals and calling on the national executive to oppose them. It was hoped that the guidelines would encourage colleges to rethink their policies by, for example, providing single sex courses for female technicians—there are currently 250,000 technicians, of whom only 3,000 are women—or in craft design and technology.

The provision of other application could be in increasing recruitment to teacher training courses where the number of male or female applicants is falling, in particularly the latter, and in retaining courses for teachers in shortage subjects.

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Oxford students prescribe lessons for dons

Oxford University may be a world-famous centre of excellence but when it comes to teaching and lecturing the dons have quite a bit to learn, according to a recent survey of student opinion.

A report from the students union reception committee says that don lectures, but more than two-thirds of those who participated in the survey said tuition could be improved.

Unfortunately there are occasional when don turn out to be incapable of teaching. This is unacceptable in long established institutions like Oxford which remains a teaching establishment as well as a centre for research.

The committee suggests, fairly bluntly, that tutors might well benefit from some kind of training in teaching methods. "It seems absurd to us that academics are assumed to be able to teach without having received training of any kind."

Lecturers are sometimes incoherent and/or inaudible, says the report. Three-quarters of the 412 students asked, thought lecturers could benefit from help with voice projection, presentation and other techniques.

The other bone of contention was the imbalance between lectures, seminars and classes. More than one-third of arts students attend no lectures at all, and other students go to only one or two a week.

Poor presentation, lethargy in choice of subjects, and pressure of tutorial work are blamed. Tutors are also encouraged to tell under-achievers what they "honestly feel" about their work.

In all, the committee has 17 suggestions for further discussion before it publishes a further report on the same issues in the summer.

The students' survey of teaching in the university is thought to be the first since 1964. Some don will be hoping it is another 15 years before there is another survey by undergraduates.

Professor angered by BBC's lack of consultation over cuts

The chairman of the Schools Broadcasting Council for Scotland has criticized the decision to cut back Scottish education broadcasting without consultation with himself or his committee.

The chairman, Professor Baillie I. Ruthven, who is also principal of Moray House College of Education, said: "It is, perhaps sympathetically, the lack of concern that the BBC has for education that no consultation was held and that the economies were effected by closed rather than by open debate."

BBC Scotland's controller, Mr Patrick Ramsay, backed by the Scottish Broadcasting Council, has proposed cuts of 25 per cent in education broadcasts followed by a 75 per cent cut in the remaining 75 per cent next year with a view to halving the service funded from other sources, although there is widespread belief that it would be totally unworkable to expect the Scottish Education Department to provide the necessary funding.

The Scottish cuts compare with an overall BBC cutback of 10 per cent in radio education programmes.

In reply to a letter from the Schools Broadcasting Council urging reconsideration, BBC chairman Sir

Michael Svanm said that in these days of devolution this was a matter to be decided by the Broadcasting Council for Scotland and not by him. This has been seen by many as an aspect of back-slapping.

The proposed cutbacks have also been strongly condemned by the Association of Lecturers in Colleges of Education, the Scottish National Party and the Scottish branch of Equity, the actors' union.

The largest single cut proposed by BBC Scotland's controller is the dismantling of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. A campaign to save the SSO has been set up, backed by such eminent musicians as Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Peter Maestri, and Sir Colin Davis. The campaign's action committee is led by Dr David Lumsden, principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. The dismantling of the SSO would have an enormous effect on the recruitment of music students, he said, as well as on present students who are dependent on the orchestra for teaching and professional experience.

Dr Lumsden welcomed this week's announcement of support from the Scottish Trades Union Congress, which is urging Sir Michael Svanm and Mr Ramsay to reverse the decision about the cuts.

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Charlotte Barry reports from a conference on equal opportunities in higher education held at Manchester Poly

UCCA accused of sex discrimination

The system used by the Universities Central Council on Admissions discriminates implicitly against women and could be in breach of the law, a conference on equal opportunities in higher education heard last week.

Mr Eric Robinson, a member of the Equal Opportunities Commission and principal of Bradford College, told the conference at Manchester Polytechnic, which was sponsored by the EOC and the Society for Research into Higher Education, that clearing houses like UCCA discriminate against innocent students by failing to guarantee their priority for places in institutions near home.

He told about 50 delegates, mainly women, that the use of national catchment for full-time higher education students is based on the assumption that the student is mobile and willing to do so three or four years to full-time study.

"Any student or potential student who cannot meet these requirements is at a disadvantage," he said. "Such a student is more likely to be a woman than a man in consequence. In particular, of the responsibilities of motherhood and of dependence on parents and other relatives, which are more likely to be a woman than a man in consequence."

"The UCCA system might be held to be in breach of the Sex Discrimination Act," he said.

Pinpointing other major factors of discrimination in national policy on higher education, Mr Robinson criticized the Government for failing to make any clear statement of intention to plan for equality or to adopt policies that acknowledge the needs of many potential women students.

He said that although more women are entering higher education, they are tending to enter areas with poor job prospects. He also pointed out that the EOC study, due to be published later this month, which looks at the fate of women who would have trained as teachers if a number of colleges of education had not closed down.

"The findings are depressing and disturbing," he said.

Mr Robinson added that the EOC is anxious to hear about possible breaches of the law in admission procedures in the award of student grants and in the appointment and promotion of teachers and ancillary staff.

He assured the conference that although there have been few legal cases, which are not mainly the responsibility of the universities, it is not complacent about breaches of the law in higher education.

It is conducting a formal investigation into North Gwent college of education, where Ebbs Vale, where discrimination in staff promotion has been alleged.

Specific policies must be adopted by universities, colleges and schools if women are to continue to consolidate their position in higher education, the conference was told by Jessa Blackstone, professor of educational administration in the Institute of Education at London University.

Professor Blackstone, who belongs to the top per cent of British university professors who are women, said that, although the proportion of female undergraduates has risen in the past 10 years, to 40 per cent, we must not become complacent.

Universities should be operating more open admission systems which will encourage mature students and there should be more provision of part-time courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Student counselling should take into account the special problems that women students have to face and help them combine their career and family. Better career guidance should be given to women, to help them to see the possibilities of higher degrees and postgraduate study.

Both in colleges and universities, more part-time jobs should be available and there should be concessions for those who have three children or more, to help them to combine their career and family.

Professor Blackstone suggested



Eric Robinson: criticized Government

transfer between institutions; and insistence on the use only strictly relevant and necessary entry criteria.

He also emphasized the importance of changing the structure of higher education courses which correlate to certain jobs, such as secretary or engineer, and which tend to be exclusive to one sex.

"The promotion of equality of opportunity is not to be achieved by getting more women into men's jobs in a men's world through education and training defined for that world," he said.

"More fundamental structural considerations are essential."

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Professor Blackstone suggested

UGC policy comes under attack

Some form of positive discrimination should be introduced to help women about equal opportunities in higher education in Britain, Dr Helen Roberts, senior researcher at Ilkley College, told the conference.

Creches and nurseries should be established on a realistic scale so more mothers can enrol as students and staff, and more resources should be made available to mount courses aimed at creating new opportunities for women.

"We cannot talk of equal access to higher education while one section of the community is systematically excluded because of the care of children," she said.

Referring to the new UGC policy on the funding of universities, she said: "This is a retrograde step, and one about which we should be protesting as loudly as possible."

"In demanding child-care facilities as a prerequisite to affirmative action we would be only redressing the balance of past discrimination."

Roberts suggested that falling rolls may cause at least institutions to reconsider the provision of creche and nursery facilities as "a carrot" to catch the market of young mothers.

"Childcare might not be close to the heart of the educational administrator, but keeping up admissions certainly is," she said.

Regarding courses providing new opportunities for women, Dr Roberts emphasized the importance of expanding what is already available and therefore, helping to cope with unemployment and the technical revolution by adopting relevant forms of education which will affect a relatively large proportion of the population.

Referring to the affirmative action policy adopted in the United States, Dr Roberts pointed out that it is making a greater impact there than in Britain because of the discrimination under the Sex Discrimination Act.

She pointed out that a limited form of positive discrimination could be accomplished under the existing Act, even allowing for the financial, cultural and political constraints on spending in higher education.

"Up until now, achievement in the area of sex discrimination and education have been dismal," she said. "Let us see if we cannot usefully look at the gaps in provision in market terms, and fill these gaps to the advantage of women."

In colleges of education more teaching on the undesirability of stereotyping should be introduced, and in the schools teachers should be actively seeking girls to take subjects in which they are traditionally under-represented.

Teachers should also be keeping a closer check on the policy examination boards, now evidence suggests that some "exam methods" tend to be a greater success-rate among boys than girls.

Professor Blackstone said she would also like to see universities employing part-time women graduates in subjects traditionally unpopular with girls so they could recruit schoolgirls for these areas.

Referring to her research on women students in British universities in the late 1960s, Professor Blackstone pointed out that women academics now constituted 13 per cent of the total, compared with nine per cent 10 years ago.

Whereas in 1969 one per cent of professors in universities, six per cent of readers and six per cent of lecturers and 22 per cent of other categories were women, in 1976 two per cent of professors, six and a half per cent of senior lecturers, 13 per cent of lecturers and 31 per cent of other categories were women.

But, although the proportion of

women undergraduates has risen from 35 per cent to 40 per cent, subject differences have remained much the same, with women concentrated in the humanities, social sciences and education.

However, a high proportion of women still enter medicine and although high proportions study the science faculties, few women study physics, for instance, but a relatively high proportion study biology.

Report confirms lack of science teacher trainees

A startling decline in the number of physics, chemistry and mathematics graduates going into teaching is reported by Hull University Careers and Appointment Board. This is despite a 33 per cent increase in the output of graduates in the years 1970-78.

They say: "Concern should also be expressed about the quality of the graduates entering science teaching since the vast majority do not have good honours degrees, and indeed many have thirds or pass degrees."

"Teaching is not a career suitable only for the academically less able graduate—the profession desperately needs lively, enthusiastic and able men and women."

According to the board, the Department of Education and Science claims that there is an immediate shortage of more than 10,000 in physical science and mathematics in an under-estimate.

In the period stated, the number of physicists fell by 52 per cent, chemists by 54 per cent and mathematicians by 35 per cent. "Urgent national initiatives, possibly including differential salary scales for science teachers and perhaps higher grants for science undergraduates, are essential if science teaching in schools is to continue to be viable."

Without the most strenuous initiatives, the future for Britain's technology and its whole economic revival looks bleak indeed."

The board also pinpoints some of the difficulties being faced by law graduates. It says it is now essential for students to undertake a year of full-time postgraduate study if they wish to enter the legal profession, but awards for these courses are discretionary.

"We understand that some local authorities have decided not to make awards in 1980 and if this

policy extends... there is no doubt that some of our graduates in future will be quite unable to complete their legal training."

The DES is to introduce many awards for these courses.

The board reports that 1979 was a bewildering and disappointing year for many graduates.

The General Election has a severe adverse effect on employment because of the three-month moratorium on civil service recruiting and federal freezing of posts in the public sector.

The end to exchanging England withdrew some offers of employment, and grants for postgraduate studies were cancelled.

According to the annual report of the Careers Advisory Service of the University of Newcastle, there is continuing demand for graduates with so-called "irrelevant" degrees.

Such graduates "have no degree shortage of opportunity, provided they adopt a flexible approach, and accept the need for post-university training."

The report points out that any student who is unjustified in his pessimism about career prospects if they looked upon their degree as a point of departure rather than a destination and considered the possibility of further training they would find plenty of job opportunities.

Immediate Government action to improve careers education for teachers is being called for by the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling in a letter to the Secretary of State for Education.

Writing in response to the Government proposals on *A Framework for the School Curriculum*, NICE urges Mr Mark Carleton to launch careers education on the line of short-term subjects for which it is running crash training programmes.

Call to end Ulster teacher segregation

Desegregation of teacher education in Northern Ireland and its consolidation at Ulster Polytechnic is called for this week by the Association of Polytechnic Teachers.

In its submission to Sir Henry Chilver's higher education review group, Ulster Polytechnic APT says a one-campus system is the most effective and educationally sound solution.

Arguing for an end to segregation between the sexes and religious denominations, it says there are no tenable arguments for keeping the present number of teacher training institutions in being.

APT says: "We abhor the present situation in which students who are well qualified can nevertheless find it difficult or impossible to obtain posts in schools of a denomination other than that of the institution in which they were trained."

At present, teacher education is distributed among the state-run educational Stranmillis College, and two single-sex Roman Catholic institutions (St Mary's and St Joseph's) and Ulster Polytechnic, which offers a wide range of specialist courses. Queen's University offers a postgraduate certificate.

The APT council is on May 14 at the Polytechnic of Central London.

College defends school scheme

A Cambridge college has defended a new entrance scheme which will discriminate in favour of comprehensive school leavers from Greenwich in London and against those with London matriculation.

The editor of the *Cambridge Review* magazine, Mr Oliver Letwin, said that Corpus Christi College were trying to act like a "social homogener" and admit academically inferior students who are ineligible to benefit from education in Cambridge.

Mr Letwin, writing in his magazine, put the new scheme on a par with Magdalen College, which used to take inferior candidates from major public schools, particularly Eton.

Dr Christopher Andrew, acting senior tutor at Corpus Christi, said the scheme is geared to select "candidates of high academic ability" who will fully live up to high standards at Corpus.

Under the scheme two places

Poly teachers still out in the cold

The Department of Education and Science has warned tonight against the Education Under-Secretary Dr Rhodes Boyson's suggestion that the APT should be the national association of teachers.

This May Dr Boyson will become the first minister to speak at APT's national conference in the 30th year of its existence.

But the DES said this week that acceptance of the invitation should not be taken as a sign of a recently reopened consultation on the question of an APT seat on the Education Committee.

The Government is seeking the views of the employment organizations and the committee after a request from APT. A decision is widely expected this summer.

One practical objection being put forward to APT recognition is that a national joint council dealing with conditions of service has only just been set up, organized in conjunction with the Burnham agreement.

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North American News

Saudis give Princeton \$5m to expand life sciences research

From Clive Cookson

Princeton University has accepted a \$5m gift from Saudi Arabia to expand teaching and research in the life sciences. In return, Princeton will help the University of Riyadh improve its own teaching and research capabilities.

The agreement, signed in Riyadh by Princeton president William Bowen and University of Riyadh president Mansour al-Turki, will bring Princeton the largest donation ever received by an American academic institution from an Arab country—and probably the largest from a foreign country. The money will be paid in five instalments of \$1m over the next 12 months.

Princeton said the first \$1m would be spent on improvements to its Mott Biological Laboratory, which was built in the 1960s. The remaining \$4m will be devoted to research and teaching programmes at Mott and at the new biochemical sciences laboratory. The funds will be spent on equipment, salaries, not on the construction of new buildings.

Gifts from Middle Eastern countries to American universities have been a highly controversial issue over the past few years, partly because of the potential bias of influential sections of public opinion leads to an almost automatic assumption that Arab donors have ulterior political motives. There have also been fears that academic programmes funded by Arab money might tend to exclude Jewish participants, or even women. (Some times there has been at least a strain of truth in such charges.) As a result several proposed gifts and exchange agreements have fallen through.

The Princeton-Riyadh arrangement is unlikely to be so controversial, for two reasons. First, the life sciences are intrinsically a far less explosive field than Middle Eastern studies elsewhere. Political bias is not an issue in basic scientific research, but is almost unavoidable in Arab studies.

Secondly, the agreement under which Princeton will advise the University of Riyadh on the establishment of its own life sciences centre and send out faculty members to teach and carry out research in Saudi Arabia, states: "Merit will be the criterion upon which individual scholars, technical experts and students will be proposed and received."

Although the language does not



President Bowen: deeply grateful

quite meet the demand of the American Jewish committee that such agreements include specific statements of nondiscrimination, the committee's Director of Special Programmes, Ira Silverman, (a Princeton alumnus), said the "merit" clause should be sufficient to protect the interests of women, Jews and other minorities.

No Jewish or other group at Princeton has expressed any opposition to the arrangement, the university said. The terms of the agreement have taken five years to work out. The first party from Princeton went to Riyadh to open negotiations in 1975.

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White House fills top jobs in education

Although five months have elapsed since Congress voted to create a separate, cabinet-level Education Department, and more than four have passed since President Carter nominated Shirley Hufstader to lead it, many of the top jobs are only now being filled.

The White House has just named Steven Minter, former Massachusetts commissioner of public welfare and now vice-president of the Cleveland Foundation, to be under-secretary of education, as Mrs Hufstader's deputy.

President Carter said he would nominate Albert Bowker, who last month announced his retirement as chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, to be assistant secretary for post-secondary education (a popular choice with Washington's higher education associations). The assistant secretary for educational research and improvement will be James Rutherford, who is now assistant director of science education at the National Science Foundation.

Four senior officials—three other assistant secretaries and the inspector-general, who will be in charge of the department's auditors, have yet to be chosen. Richard Beattie, who was director of the transition team working to set up the Education Department, expects to recommend suitable candidates to the White House within one or two weeks.

He now thinks early May is the most likely launch date for the new department, which takes in the federal education activities now administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, together with a handful of small education programmes from other government agencies. The legislation establishing the ED gave the Administration until the end of May to set it up.

Mrs Hufstader had hoped to have the department running by April. But Mr Beattie, who was formerly general counsel at Hewlett-Packard, said the transition was proving more difficult than he expected. "The nuts and bolts problems" of getting suitable office space in

Washington, setting up an adequate administrative structure, establishing a departmental payroll system, and so on—were causing trouble. But he did not expect major policy issues. "But he was confident that by May, everything would be running smoothly."

Organizing research has been one big difficulty, and in particular the leading National Institute of Education, the main government agency sponsoring educational research, with an annual budget close to \$100m. However, Mr Beattie said that NIE will remain in existence as a self-contained institute with its own director. It will be part of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, under assistant secretary James Rutherford.

Dr Rutherford said he could not discuss in detail his ideas for the office since he had not yet been confirmed in his job, but in general he saw its role as "providing the department with its view of the future." He saw research as the key to improving education.

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from Mario Modiano

The students were electing the officers of their unions as well as the representatives for the tenth student congress which would this week elect the central council of the national students union EFEE. EFEE, since the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, has been under the

The ministry commission, on the other hand, said abolition of the bursat would result in universities offering their own entrance exams. These might lead to them favouring:

In a statement announcing the appointment, Mr. J. D. Cameron, chairman of the university council,

from James Hutchinson

Parliament seems to have overlooked a most important factor: courses could not simply be shortened without their shape and content being altered.

from Uli Schmetzer

Bill introduced

campus

They also complained that the quality of food had deteriorated and demanded an improvement.

There is only one organized public course available in Australia for those who want to enter university through this side door. It is organized one evening a week by the organization.

Not that the observatory, which was moved from its original London site in 1948, will be short of a role to play in United Kingdom astronomy. For one thing, it will be responsible for coordinating

"It was a fantastic effort. We had a team of young men, mostly Scots, who camped out on top of these mountains carrying out their work. It was the most intensive and enthusiastic campaign of siting a roasting ever undertaken", Professor Smith added.

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Combined with its other meteorological, navigational and time-keeping work, the Royal Greenwich Observatory's 237 employees can then expect to continue to play a realistic role in developing United Kingdom astronomy, and maintain a scientific heritage that has spanned more than three centuries.

Eliminating the binding of periodicals by converting to microform saves precious staff time spent in collating, checking and despatching bundles of magazines and newspapers. Buying rare and out-of-print books from UMI also saves time that would otherwise be spent in tracking down elusive titles.

We now bill all our customers in US dollars. This means that you pay at the current rate of exchange, and with the dollar's continuing weakness against the pound, that means saving to you now.

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Your saving: £4.63 or 26%

Charlotte Barry talks to Lord Perry, vice chancellor of the OU as he reflects on his years there

Man who opened up the Open University ready to step down

On the eve of retirement, Lord Perry of Walton can look back on his past 11 years of full-time work with a combined sense of pleasure, pride and achievement.

As the first vice-chancellor of the Open University, he has had the rare opportunity of putting a completely new idea into practice and thereby being the architect of one of the most important social and educational developments of the century.

Now it is an established part of the higher education system, and similar institutions have been set up in its wake all over the world. It is hard to believe the scepticism with which the concept of the OU was greeted.

Its success story is the undeniable product of Lord Perry's strong administrative powers, tenacious leadership and insatiable appetite for problem-solving and innovation. He said: "It's been a most exciting time. It's been marvellous to be given the opportunity to build something new that is working. The staff are enthusiastic, the students are so enthusiastic. The overall pattern is one of success, one of achievement."

But I am retiring now because I think I have had enough and the institution has had enough of me. There are things you know you can never achieve; you know perfectly well there's certain things you never can do."

The candid way of speaking reflects the character of the man. Indeed Lord Perry's avowed off-hand, impatient manner and distaste for small talk does not always endear him to strangers, who tend to find him brusque and off-putting. Yet, underneath, a warm, rather shy man who inspires much affection and loyalty.

Lord Perry admits that he is not regarded as sympathetic. "I am sympathetic to people who are in trouble if they come to me about it—but they don't come."

He adds without a hint of embarrassment: "I have always been intrinsically arrogant. There's very little I can watch people do that I don't think I can do better myself. I put my mind to it. I think that I take on things like the OU and other challenges because I believe I can do them better."

Lord Perry's description of himself backs his track record. During his Scottish boyhood, at the Academy, and Dundee High School, he remembers being first in every-

thing, though he never worked very hard. On leaving school he was faced with the choice either to follow his mother into medicine or his father (who was also a civil servant) into the world of professional singing.

He chose the former path and following graduation from St Andrews University worked with the Colonial Medical Service in Nigeria, the RAF, the Medical Research Council and as director of the department of biological standards at the National Institute of Medical Research. He was professor of pharmacology and vice-principal of Edinburgh University when he was appointed vice-chancellor of the Open University in 1969.

As a complete outsider to the field of adult education, his appointment was greeted with as much scepticism as the idea of the OU itself. In an open letter written to Lord Perry in *The Guardian* one academic warned him of the jungle of adult education he was entering. I wrote an open reply in which I said that at least I was able to bring to the Open University an open mind. So at least in the early days the lack of experience was an advantage. I could sit above the fray."

The most attractive challenge was effective teaching at a distance. I had no ideas about distance learning, no alternative motives to help adults in the community. But I had for a long time been a fairly vituperative critic of the standard of university teaching," said Lord Perry.

I thought that if you could devise courses that could be taught by people who are part-time at a distance without any face-to-face contact you have to think what you say pretty hard. Therefore, what you produce is better than the average lecture and is likely to have an effect on the other colleges and universities."

During his first two years, Lord Perry was in his element as he used his innovative skills to get the university off the ground and ensure its viability in a still hostile milieu. This problem was exacerbated by an unexpected change in government in June 1970 when the Tories won the election and the OU faced a large cut in its budget.

In spite of the uncertainty, Lord Perry led the impetuous going and at the head of a small planning com-



Lord Perry of Walton: tenacious leadership

mittee found a site at Milton Keynes, undertook a successful crash building programme; appointed academic and administrative staff; planned course materials; established the principle of open entry; organized a credit system; tackled broadcasting problems with the BBC. It was with a profound sense of relief that they watched applications pour in from 16,000 prospective students.

Little more than ten years later the Open University is recognized as the foremost distance learning institution in the world. The total student population is 75,000, one in 12 British graduates is from the OU and so far 39,000 adults have gained the BA (Open) through part-time study.

Since the beginning more than 150,000 students have been admitted and there have been well over 400,000 applications. Most encouraging of all, the crude cost of each student per annum is at present a modest £650 compared with at least five times that much at a traditional university.

This phenomenal rate of growth has been followed closely by a successful battle to achieve academic credibility. But over the past few months Lord Perry has watched

with anxiety the way in which inflation and government spending cuts have brought more financial stress to his students as fees have increased and discretionary grants have been withdrawn.

There is the growing problem of the role of broadcasting in the OU teaching programme, as the university faces a shifting of schedules to less accessible times on BBC television and radio and uncertainty about the share of air time on the planned ITV2.

Lord Perry is also disappointed that the continuing education programme, which he considers the single most important objective in founding the OU, has not expanded as quickly as he envisaged. He realizes his very strong commitment to the project is at odds with many members of the university who feel the undergraduate programme must take overall priority in the time of cuts.

He further regrets the winding down of the OU Centre for International Cooperation Services which has done so much to promote the setting up of distance learning systems overseas, but has failed to cover its costs at a time when no more central government cash is available.

At the end of an exciting and fruitful decade, Lord Perry looks back with a sense of pride and achievement. His decision to retire shortly before his 60th birthday is further motivated by his disillusionment with the university's administrative machinery which he feels has become too complex, cumbersome and inefficient.

"No one thought what it would be like to keep the records of 75,000 students or what sort of computer set-up was needed. The whole thing couldn't be planned in advance because there was no precedent. Therefore it grew bigger and bigger."

One of the implications of the placement organization is a university census with 840 members. It is an attempt to make decisions simpler and easier. Lord Perry has devised an experimental working committee of about 30.

But any attempts to tackle the real organizational problems have been frustrated by the realization that the different sections, divisions and units were created individually by the original members of staff, many of whom are still there. "I would never want people who have put their heart and soul into their jobs to be hurt by radical changes," he says.

From a personal point of view the growth in size and complexity has meant that Lord Perry is grown out of touch with the day-to-day going on of the campus life.

"I only get the intractable problems that nobody can solve, when as at the start everything came onto my desk. Now problems are solved down the line. I don't know they exist and I feel sad and more out of touch with the operation," he says with regret.

Now the announcement of the appointment of a successor is imminent, he hopes to retire as soon as possible in order to take advantage of accrued study leave. He will use the time to write a book about distance learning systems and their growth around the world, and to supplement his account of the early years of the Open University.

Because of his close involvement with the International Institute for Distance Learning which is based in Milton Keynes, he intends to carry on living in the area with his wife and young family of two boys and a dog, and six months.

As chairman of the Research Defence Society, which promotes anti-violence, he will be taking an active interest in the Bill concerning experiments on animals which is being discussed in both Houses of Parliament.

Lord Perry also intends to carry on giving base oratorio and German *Lieder*, play plenty of golf and spend one day a week in the house of Lords, which he has only attended since being made a peer last year.

The first year of study, then, is present. But merely lowering national expectations and lowering educational standards is not the answer. It is the second year of study which has become that much more difficult.

The need, in fact, is to move the teaching resources to do the first-year group—and to do so in such a way that, though general standards or pass-grades may be lowered, the opportunities for good students to develop are not blocked. This means building up a new and more flexible form of teaching, modelled on the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which is a more positive relationship with a student.

It also follows that if universal teaching methods in Holland are to be modernized as radically as the degree structure is to be changed, the pressure will be on the universities to develop their own prior educational preparation. In the first place there is clearly a need to stimulate teaching methods and programmes so that the independent interest of students is encouraged, rather than suppressed, and the learning goals which they seek to achieve are seen to be attainable within the programmed environment.

At the same time, if selective entry to university remains politically unacceptable in Holland, then it follows that lower educational targets may have to be set during

Lionel Cohen



Charles Osborne on writing a biography

Wystan Auden: untangling the facts from the gossip

The first suggestion that I should write a biography of W. H. Auden was made to me very shortly after the poet's death, in the autumn of 1973, and I refused without giving the matter much thought. There seemed so many reasons to say "No". He had died so recently that I had not adjusted to the fact of his absence and surely in due course someone of his own generation, someone who had known him better and longer than I, would undertake the task. Stephen Spender, I expected.

There was, of course, the much talked of Auden dislike of prying biographies, and the request, made by Auden to his literary executor Edward Mendelson in a letter of May 9, 1972, that a notice appear after his death in the *American* and *British* press requesting any friends who have letters from me to burn them when they've done with them, and on no account to show them to anybody else.

Auden died on September 28, 1972, and some weeks later the notice that Auden had requested was published in various magazines and newspapers in Great Britain and the United States. Some of the poet's friends felt required to comment. Stephen Spender, Auden's oldest and most faithful friend, said he thought Auden's request was superfluous for "he was in no way a letter writer—the average letter was two lines". Well, that may be. I certainly have a large number of inter-paragraph letters of no great interest from Auden, of which the following is a representative example:

Dear Charles,
I forgot to ask you when I saw you if, as in previous years, there will be a reception on the Monday at the Martini place in Canada House for the participants.

I hope so, as both Chester and I want to have the opportunity of meeting Theodorakis.

Yours ever,
Wystan

But Auden also wrote longer letters, of two or three pages. Those to Stephen Spender, especially the ones written during the war, from America, are of enormous interest and fascination, and it would have been a great disservice to "burn" them for Spender to have burned them as it would have been for Max Brod to have destroyed Kafka's manuscripts as he requested.

Another friend of Auden's, Geoffrey Grigson, was quoted in the press as saying that he had a large collection of Auden letters "but if he says they should be burnt, I shall burn them". He did not add that he had already sold a number of them for a large sum of money.

It also follows that if universal teaching methods in Holland are to be modernized as radically as the degree structure is to be changed, the pressure will be on the universities to develop their own prior educational preparation. In the first place there is clearly a need to stimulate teaching methods and programmes so that the independent interest of students is encouraged, rather than suppressed, and the learning goals which they seek to achieve are seen to be attainable within the programmed environment.

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figures, though he made it perfectly clear that psychological analysis of character was not what he wanted to find, but facts and gossip. Reviewing *The Diaries of Tchaikovsky* in the *New York Times* in 1954, he regretted that Tchaikovsky had not entrusted to his biographer the facts of his sexual activities. But Auden ends his review by pointing out that the hero of the diaries:

"works, travels, goes for walks, worries. He does himself with castor oil, he gets drunk, he does his temper in curds. One could write it all one's self. But it doesn't matter. After all, he wrote the most beautiful ballet music in the world and detested Brahms. He is our friend. And we do not enjoy reading a friend's diary."

Of the two-volume *Letters of Thomas Mann* (his father-in-law), Auden wrote: "Anyone who is interested not only in Thomas Mann himself but also in the problems which confront every writer will hunt, devour these letters, and eat them up. Of course, and one day, no doubt, anyone who is interested not only in W. H. Auden but in the problems which confront every writer will hunt eagerly through a volume of Auden's letters." Auden's friends were really that interested in his letters.

Some months after Auden's death, I was approached by a publisher to write something about the poet for a special memorial issue. I contributed a not entirely pious account of his funeral, which I think would have made Wystan chuckle, and which brought me a number of letters from publishers for a book about him. I was still reluctant. By this time, Stephen Spender had edited a volume, *W. H. Auden: A Tribute*, which contained biographical essays by 36 of the poet's friends and acquaintances. I knew, too, that Spender had agreed to write about Auden's life up to 1939 for a biographical volume to be written by himself and three others who would deal with the American, Italian and Austrian periods. The volume, to be published by Faber & Faber, is still in the stacks but I gather is awaiting the completion of the Spender contribution. I also knew that, at some unspecified time in the distant future, Auden's literary executor Edward Mendelson would begin work on the definitive "authorized" biography.

It was only when I read the volume edited by Stephen Spender and discovered that it did not set itself up to be any more than a series of notes and signposts for a future biographer, and when I read that the poet's friends were going to come to fruition for a good many years, that I began seriously to consider taking upon myself the task of writing the first biography of Auden.

The next time I was asked, I said yes, but only after consulting Charles Montagu at Faber & Faber, and after I had read the book by Vale, and satisfying myself that they did not feel their projects in any way threatened.

I must not embarrass Professor Mendelson who, as Auden's literary executor, was in a difficult position. He did not feel that he

was in any sense, authorise the book which I proceeded to write, but his help to me during the course of my writing it deserves much warmer thanks than the form of words I used in my Acknowledgments.

As soon as I had agreed to write a biography of Auden, I set myself certain hurdles to surmount. My main concern was, without avoiding the less sunny aspects of his character and personality, to write a book which Wystan would not have found objectionable. Also, I wanted my book to be informative, to reveal where Auden was and when and why, and I was determined that it should be readable. However, of a number of gratifying reviews of the American edition, which was published last autumn, the one which pleased me most was not that which found the book "very readable and free from the solemnity that deadens many literary biographies" but *Time's* comment that Auden would probably have grudgingly liked the book.

The first hurdle I set myself was to only write, as far as possible, with the aid of my own notes and recollections and of published sources without attempting to interview the hundreds of people who had known Auden at various periods of his life from his school days to his last years in New York and Vienna.

To talk to such people would have required me to take several months' leave from my full-time position as a Director of the Arts Council, where I was not prepared to do, nor do I expect the Arts Council would have agreed.

Limiting my research abroad, therefore, to my annual holidays, I proceeded to collect material on Auden from libraries in England, America, Austria and elsewhere, material in the form of interviews, articles, reviews, essays and news items, in newspapers, books, leading literary journals and little-known student magazines.

Clearly, there were two or three of Auden's old friends whom I needed to speak to, and of these by far the most important, from my point of view, was Stephen Spender. Not only had Spender not destroyed his letters from Auden, he was willing to let me see them and quote from them without restriction. Of course, I needed the permission of the Auden estate as well, and this was readily given by Edward Mendelson.

I placed the usual notice in literary journals, both here and in the United States, asking for information relating to Auden, and this brought forth a rich haul. A number of libraries produced four-volume material, and one American library sent me copies of *Auden Letters* in its possession. The librarian of King's College, Cambridge, was unique in his singularly unhelpful attitude, despite Stephen Spender's having directed me to an important Auden letter which he had given to the library; this gentleman effectively prevented me from seeing it.

A major problem was the assessment of material and information sent to me in response to my published request. A number of people who had been to school with Auden or his elder brothers, or who knew him at Oxford in the 1920s, or were colleagues of his in the 1930s, or were taught by him in the United States in the 1940s, wrote to share their mem-



Above: The older Auden. Left: Shortly before his death in September, 1973, Auden in the garden at Kirchstetten with Chester Kallman and Charles Osborne.

ories with me. These were all most helpful, after one had made due allowance for lapses of memory, discrepancies between different accounts of the same incident, and so on. But some of the material I was offered was too scurrilous to be used, and some was presented (and in some cases, I am certain, concocted) out of sheer malice, usually towards Chester Kallman, Auden's close friend who outlived him by no more than 16 months. Some curious jealousies came to light—I made use of none of these.

Rather more serious are the things one can get wrong, or slightly out of focus, when one relies on what people who ought to know tell one, instead of checking for oneself. An example: the house in Midgash Street, Brooklyn Heights, where in 1940-41 Auden presided over a Bohemian household whose members included, among others, Carson McCullers, Benjamin Britten, Peter Peers and Gypsy Rose Lee.

Relying on information provided by New Yorkers, I wrote that in 1945, "all the houses in Midgash Street were destroyed in the construction of a new automobile approach to Brooklyn Bridge. No trace of the street or the former atmosphere of the neighbourhood remains." When I was in New York last autumn, at the time of American publication of my book, I took the opportunity to wander about Brooklyn, something I had never done on any previous visit to the city. There, in Brooklyn Heights was Midgash Street, and looking much as it must have looked 40 years ago. All that had been destroyed was the short block which had contained the Auden house, in order to facilitate the construction not of the Brooklyn approach which is a good half a mile away, but of a freeway.

I have already received two good humoured complaints from present inhabitants of Midgash Street, one of whom has offered to show me some of "that old time Brooklyn Bohemian atmosphere" next time I am in New York.

Knowing personally the subject of one's biography has its advantages, of course, but it also has its pitfalls. Auden was a truthful creature, but his memory was highly selective, and tended at times to have been true instead of what was, in fact, true.

One day in the garden of his house at Kirchstetten, he gave me to understand that he had composed what may well be the longest palindrome in English: "T. Eliot, top bird, notes purring toward emitting, is said. I'd assign it a name."

I duly mentioned this in the penultimate chapter of my biography. It appears, however, that Auden had simply, over the years, assimilated that achievement unto himself, for in Brendan Gill's delightful volume of reminiscence, *Here at the New Yorker*, which I read only a few weeks ago, I was dismayed to find the same palindrome attributed to the Scottish poet, Alasdair Reid. Mr Gill has since assured me that it is quite certainly by Alasdair Reid. It is a close friend of mine and I was practically beside him when he wrote it.

The one major difficulty, when one contemplates writing about a living person or someone only recently dead, is how to deal with your subject's close personal and sexual relationships. If, by being truthful, you are going to distress your subject's family, it is surely better to wait for time to solve the problem, even if time solves it by assigning, years later, another biographer to the task. What is pointed out, surely, is to distort the picture by omission of important detail. A generation ago it would not have been possible to speak frankly of Auden's homosexuality without giving offence to a number of people. This is no longer the case, and I found I was able to present that important aspect of Auden without embarrassing anyone who had not already embarrassed himself in print. It would, for instance, be absurd to write guardedly of Christopher Isherwood two years after *Christopher and His Kind*.

But that does not mean that it is necessary to identify in print every one of Auden's sex partners. It is the job of the biographer to assess and select from the mass of material which is presented. The biographer who throws at the reader every piece of information down to the colour of the shirt which Mr X wore when he called on Miss Y, is simply incompetent.

Finally, a story told to me too late for inclusion in this book. Auden was in New York. Auden and Robert Lowell shared the same doctor. Lowell encountered Auden leaving the doctor's surgery after a check-up, and Auden, who must have been about sixty years of age, said to him: "Good news! I've just been given a clean bill of health. Doctor tells me that with my constitution I'll live till I'm 85." The doctor later told Lowell that what he had said to Auden was that he already had the constitution of a man of 85.

The author is literature director of the Arts Council.

BOOKS

Eponymous hero of a theory

Edward Royle lectures in history at the University of York.

BOOKS

Aristocracy under pressure

Aristocracy and the People: Britain, 1815-1865
by Norman Gash
Edward Arnold, £12.00 and £5.25
ISBN 0 7136 159 9 and 169 4

Authors of textbooks can reveal much about themselves by their choice of titles. Professor Gash concentrates in his readable, useful and supremely tidy new book more on a set of relationships than a range of processes.

Yet he has his own notions of historical specificity, considering "the success of the aristocracy and gentry in retaining both the substance of their traditional power and the social deference of other influential classes" as the "this definite article" feature of British history in the first half of the nineteenth century.

It would be unfair, however, to generalize that Professor Gash's version of history is therefore history with the "improvement" left out, as Macaulay, for example, is left out. He acknowledges change, but only as necessary, often as a concession to the part of the "authorities". His book focuses on their act and judgement, but without seeking to gloss over their (occasional) blunders. Cobden is always made to sound subversive, and Carlyle, mentioned only twice, is kept very firmly in his place. Much of the drama goes with the prophecy. It is doubtless a valuable corrective to much popular history to have it stated categorically that it is a historical distortion to think solely in terms of individual reformers battling alone

against a hostile or indifferent world. Yet it must be somewhat dispiriting to chart rivulets and never to acknowledge tides. We trace "improvement" very warily through the attitudes of the "authorities", listening to the voices of magistrates as much as to the deliberations of cabinets, and to the utterances of clergymen as much as to those of politicians.

Events, too, lose some of their drama. It was because Peterloo was uncharacteristic that it achieved notoriety. "Divorced from its contemporary context and analysed dispassionately, the Reform Act represented no more than a clumsy but vigorous hacking at the old structure to make it a roughly acceptable shape of the old material." There is a curiously un-Victorian ring to the whole story. We are offered less of a portrait of an age than an inventory of its social and political preoccupations. Professor Gash touches on the reasons for the failure back on this essentially defensive approach in his introduction. "The literary tradition is almost invariably stronger than the historical." His answer is to leave the literary almost on one side—at least an advance on the old war of conservatism. In one chapter, both his index (incomplete in its references to people mentioned in his text) and his bibliography emphasize his quite deliberate selectivity. He invites his readers not to explore but to be as supremely tidy as he is.

What is missing most from this textbook is the kind of history that some historians, though perhaps only a minority, find fascinating—the history of tastes, of buildings and objects, of creative achievement. There is a curiously un-Victorian ring to the whole story. We are offered less of a portrait of an age than an inventory of its social and political preoccupations. Professor Gash touches on the reasons for the failure back on this essentially defensive approach in his introduction. "The literary tradition is almost invariably stronger than the historical." His answer is to leave the literary almost on one side—at least an advance on the old war of conservatism. In one chapter, both his index (incomplete in its references to people mentioned in his text) and his bibliography emphasize his quite deliberate selectivity. He invites his readers not to explore but to be as supremely tidy as he is.

Asa Briggs

Lord Briggs is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford.

How Cromwell treated the Scots

Cromwellian Scotland 1651-1660
by F. D. Dow
John Donald, £15.00
ISBN 0 85976 049 9

Nothing in the Great Rebellion presents a more striking contrast than the treatment that Scotland and Ireland received from the victorious Commonwealth. There were of course good reasons. The Irish had helped to precipitate the Civil War by rising in bloody rebellion, whereas the Scots had helped to win the war for the English Parliament. Yet that alliance had barely survived the fighting, and in 1648 and again in 1651 Scottish armies, having "England" for their king, their king at war, as England's. After Cromwell had annihilated the second of these armies at Worcester, the Commonwealth's first intention was to treat Scotland as a conquered country and simply to annex it. That intention changed within three months of Cromwell's return to Westminster to a scheme for political union, and Dr Dow is surely right in seeing Cromwell's

hand in it. Her title, *Cromwellian Scotland*, is justified because although Cromwell was actually head of state for less than five years, it was his Anglo-Scottish policy bears his stamp.

Let it be said at once that this is an excellent book. It is densely packed and bears some of the subtlety of its parent thesis, but Dr Dow's scholarship is close and exact, her judgements sound and fair, and she covers much fresh ground. With this fine study following upon David Stevenson's two volumes, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44*, and *Revolution and Revolution, 1644-1651*, Scotland's tangled history throughout the revolutionary years is satisfactorily charted at last.

For though she is, it would be hard to guess that the author is a Scot, and it is indeed a positive advantage to take the story told by someone naturally attuned to Scottish attitudes and loyalties and knowledgeable about Scottish institutions, traditions and topography. But whereas she can write of the preparations for implementing the union as "a take-over bid by the English", a Glasgower is perhaps more conscious of the way his forebears viewed those recent Scottish

invasions, and still more the continuing danger that Scotland presented as a centre of royalist activity and the bitter divisions among the Scots themselves.

Between Malcontents and Presbyterians, Revolutionaries and Protestants, would probably have made peaceful self-rule well-nigh impossible even if the English had not been moved by reasons of security to keep a strong presence in Scotland. Yet apart from dedicated royalists, the main opponents of union were the ministers of the Kirk, and their strongest objection was that it would bring religious toleration with it. When representatives of the shires and burghs were summoned to consider the Commonwealth's Tender of Incorporation, 70 out of 89 constituencies registered their assent and only three positively opposed it. Dr Dow seems more surprised than he should be that some constituencies were positively for union.

The resultant regime brought several benefits besides the widely welcomed one of liberty of conscience. They included peace and order, a sustained attempt to provide a high standard of justice, and the ending of the chaotic and feudal jurisdiction. Moreover the English sought genuinely and increasingly to involve Scotsmen in the government of their country. In the judiciary, the sheriffdoms, the newly constituted commission of the peace, the Scottish council (from 1654), and to a small extent in the Parliament of the Protectorate.

To their credit, they were not deterred by this by the protected royalist movement known as the "Cavalier Rising" which here receives much of its best account. Cromwell's elevation as Protector hastened the continuing process whereby Scottish law was transferred (though never totally) from a military to a civilian basis. After his death, however, Scottish administration began to suffer from the general belief that the restored Stuart brought with it the Restoration approach to the Scottish nobility, mainly resumed their dominant role in politics. The majority of Scotsmen had been granted the prophetic power to compare their lot under the restored Stuart with what it had been under Cromwell, and they would not have welcomed the return of Charles II as they did.

Austin Woolrych

Austin Woolrych is professor of history at the University of Cambridge.

The roots of conflict

The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-72: political forces and social classes
by Peter Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson
Manchester University Press, £8.50
ISBN 0 7190 0744 5

Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939
by F. S. L. Lyons
Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £6.95
ISBN 0 19 222493 1

It is often said that Irish history has suffered from too much emphasis on purely political history at the expense of cultural and social history, and explorations of these neglected fields are—on the face of it—welcome. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson apply the Marxist concept of the state to Northern Ireland, and are the first academics to use Marxist methodology in the Irish context since E. P. Hobsbawm's *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy* first published in 1951. Lyons, in his Ford Lectures, makes as his theme the pluralist nature of Irish culture, which he defines as the experience of different groups in Ireland whose members have shared a commonly common way of life, a subject which, he notes, is still in its infancy.

There would appear to be a common ground here, since any study of Northern Ireland quickly brings its author into contact with different, and often warring, groups of people. But if these two books are to be taken as representative of the Marxist and non-Marxist schools of thought, the gap between them is very wide. Lyons seeks to reduce a pattern from his material, Bew et al attempt to impose a pre-arranged system on theirs. Lyons is faithful to the historical muse while Bew et al handle her roughly.

Sell, any challenge to received opinions on the state of the nation, myth-ridden historiography of Ireland. If the historian is prepared to grapple with verbiage sentences, barbarous words (like "disunity" for "divide"), and a functionalist style, he will learn much from this important book. Lyons's book is a study in the varieties of Ulster Unionism, the relationships between the social classes that make up what they call the Protestant Republic, and the way in which these relationships shaped the character and institutions of the Northern Ireland state. There is a pertinent comment on the assumption that Ulster Unionism was an instant manifestation of Protestant solidarity in the face of nationalism. Bew et al, and the recently released Northern Ireland Government archives enable them to plot the complex style of Unionist government in its endeavours—successful in some, times—to maintain Protestant unity in the face of occasional working-class temptation to support Labour movements.

But the book's originality and value are marred, not only by its didactic tone, but by the authors' determination to press their case beyond the evidence. They dismiss Unionist objections to Irish nationalism as irrelevant; in particular, they discount entirely Dublin's role in the creation and sustaining of Ulster Unionist hegemony and ignore the Catholic and Gaelic tone of nationalist policy. Here one must turn to Lyons for enlightenment. Even if Dublin's behaviour only provided an "excuse" for the Belfast bourgeoisie's elevation to power, it is important to understand why "excuse" could be used so effectively for over 50 years.

Similarly, Bew et al describe Catholic objections to Northern Ireland as merely the product of "a false consciousness of events". The evidence for this is a single reference to the activities of the Belfast Catholic Recruiting Committee, yet to investigate the possibility of recruiting Catholics into the Special Constabulary. The nature of Northern Ireland Catholic nationalism, the plentiful evidence of their deep-rooted aversion to Protestant politics, their dismay at the partition of Ireland, which left them at the mercy of their traditional enemies, are all left out. Bew et al must be consulted for an understanding of the conflict of identity that has

logues themselves. Bew and his colleagues yet deny the role of ideology in the actions of others.

The result is that they begin by trying to explain Ulster Unionism, and end by explaining it away. They fail to answer, or even to ask, the questions which Lyons considers why and for what ends did Ulster Unionists want power in the first place? If they sought power purely for their own selfish ends, the question still remains: Why could these ends not be realised in a different way, in a united Home Rule or Dominion Ireland? After all, Andrew Griffith's Sinn Féin movement sought the inclusion of the Ulster business classes in a self-governing Ireland, and Belfast, not Dublin, was Griffith's ideal Irish city. To have accepted this role would have enabled Belfast businessmen to maintain their dominance in Belfast, the likes of William Martin Murphy, the Dublin newspaper baron, who hostility to the trade unions in his native city was bitter.

These deficiencies exist because in this kind of "scientific" analysis, the evidence is made to fit the theory, not the theory the evidence. And the theory itself is far from scientific in construction. The authors use the terms "masses", "bourgeoisie" and "ruling class" without saying precisely what they mean. And can Lloyd George's Tory Jones be lumped into the generic term "British ruling class"? Would it not have been simpler, and more accurate, to call them members of the government, or even just Welshmen?

Lyons's use of such terms as "Presbyterian" and "Anglo-Irish" cultures also lacks precision. Do all Presbyterians think and behave alike, are they all serious people, carping for education, practising charity and Godliness? What is needed for a full understanding of Ulster society is a series of local studies like that of Rosamund Hanley in her *Protestantism and Politics in Ulster*, which sets behind generations of ideas about the masses, the ruling class and the like, and examines the ideas, the folk-memories, the assumptions, yes, and the religious and social prejudices of real people.

Harris proved that the sociological method can throw light on the problems created by a people's history, and it is a pity that Bew et al come so tangled up in their methodological parts of their book, and especially their concluding sermon, border on self-parody. One thing is tempting to say with regard to Lyons's fluent prose. Lyons has undertaken the more arduous task of cultural history, and that more rigorous discipline, literary criticism, as he fits the biographer of W. B. Yeats, however, Lyons shows that he ever some social scientists are like him in their lack of confidence in their language and literature to his insight, handles Irish and Anglo-Irish novels and poetry alike with a sense of touch, and shows how pieces of whatever origin, taken in some of it in an age of unprecedented social and economic and political change. His generalizations are always convincing, but he succeeds in delineating the various mythic beliefs that have shaped modern Ireland.

Lyons explains why Irishmen, and especially Ulstermen, do not see their divisions in class terms. Bew and his colleagues seek to demonstrate that they do not. Variety of interpretation is the stuff of historical progress, and this book needs the clash of methodological approaches instead of the clash of political dogmas. There is no single explanation for Ireland's past, when these young and able scholars, political scientists realize this, and highly original work will emerge in collaboration with their colleagues who know the attributes of the past, and an awareness of the possibility that he might not know all the answers.

D. G. Boyce

Dr Boyce lectures in political theory and government at University College, Swansea.

BOOKS

All-frequency light machine

Cosmic Landscape: voyages back along the photon's track
by Michael Rowan-Robinson
Oxford University Press, £4.95
ISBN 0 19 857553 X

As a result of biological evolution, the human eye is well-matched to the terrestrial landscape. Sunlight is plentiful, and the air is often transparent enough for us to see to great distances. Any object of substance or consequence for us can easily be discerned. It might be assumed that the same would be true for the cosmic landscape. Certainly most of astronomy until the late 1950s was carried out in ignorance of the possibilities that wavebands other than visible light might offer.

There was, of course, little choice in the matter, as our atmosphere is opaque to most of these wavebands and suitable detectors were not yet available. The past twenty years, however, have seen the new wavebands opened up with the advent of space travel and sophisticated electronic systems. We now realize that significant fractions of the universe are more or less invisible to optical astronomy. For example, some regions are obscured by surrounding clouds that can only be penetrated at infrared wavelengths, whereas others (perhaps even including most of the universe) are so hot that their energy is radiated as X-rays.

To understand the new landscape that is being constantly revealed in ever-increasing detail we need to add our eye and brain with an "all-frequency light machine". This idea is introduced early in Michael Rowan-Robinson's book, and he takes the unity of the electromagnetic spectrum; that radio, microwave, infrared, visible, ultraviolet, X and gamma-radiations are all manifestations of the same phenomenon, light, in six excellent chapters we are taken on voyages back along the photon's track to view the universe through each of these wavelength bands.

The visible sky is seen to be re-

markable in that it is completely dominated by our nearest star, the sun, and secondarily by the moon. At X-ray wavelengths, however, the moon is virtually invisible and there are cosmic sources that appear brighter than the sun. A similar situation arises with low frequency radio waves. Only when the sun is at the peak of its surface activity, such as during the year, does it rival the rest of the sky, and then only for minutes and hours at a time. The casual stargazer notes that the sky appears more or less unchanged

with time, apart from a few shooting stars or the motions of the moon and planets. At other wavelengths the universe appears as a fireworks display of eruptions and explosions. Some of these are of a magnitude such that in one hour as much radiation is released as is generated by our sun in all its lifetime—all from within an area of a similar size to the orbit of the earth about the sun.

The time is right for a review of these discoveries and Michael Rowan-Robinson has done a splendid job. At Queen Mary College London, he is researching several of these waveband bands himself. The book is written with a style and economy which conveys an interesting story, and yet at the same time gives the facts right—with a few minor exceptions. The reader need have no previous knowledge of astronomy, or even science, and yet can have travelled the "length and breadth" of the universe after reading only 140 pages.

One notable omission from *Cosmic Landscape* is pictures. This is not a serious defect for there are many beautifully illustrated (and often badly worded) books or modern astronomy to be found in most bookshops. Few "invisible" objects can, however, be illustrated in a manner which is both accurate and yet allows easy interpretation. The voyages discussed in the book may well stimulate the imagination into providing more graphic illustration than might have arisen from artwork.

Many of the best non-mathematical science books tend to be either for children, or are texts written for non-science majors in United States colleges. *Cosmic Landscape* may, with a few BBC publications that come to mind, help to make general scientific knowledge a little more acceptable to a wider range of people in this country. I certainly hope that it finds many readers.

A. C. Fabian

A. C. Fabian is at the Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge.

Guide to primate behaviour

Social Behaviour in Primates

by Neil Chalmers
Edward Arnold, £6.50
ISBN 0 7131 2771 6

The Contemporary Biology series published by Edward Arnold already has an established reputation, based on some thirty titles covering a wide range of biological subjects. Several have become widely adopted as textbooks to accompany university courses, such as Aubrey Manning's *Introduction to Animal Behaviour*, C. H. Tyndale-Baker's *Life of Man*, and John C. Thompson's *The Biology of Birds*. This latest addition to the series, *Social Behaviour in Primates*, by Neil Chalmers, of the University of York, is a worthy companion volume for these titles and an equal promise as a potential textbook for university courses concerned either with primate behaviour in general or with the biological background to human behaviour. Perhaps because of the emphasis placed on written coursework in the Open University system, this book is outstanding for clarity and for the care taken to explain the reader through the logical sequence of research findings. Less than fifty years have elapsed since the first scientific field studies of primates were carried out. This book traces the origin of field studies to Carpenter's *Primate Behaviour* (1934), and the behaviour of the howler monkey of Panama. Over the past twenty years, increasingly sophisticated laboratory studies have been combined to yield an impressive array of data and a fair set of

theoretical principles. In *Social Behaviour in Primates*, Neil Chalmers reviews some of the most important areas of research, paying special attention to methodological aspects. His own research experience, covering both field studies and laboratory projects focused on specific research problems, has placed him in good stead to review the overall picture generated from information derived from the two separate sources. The book deals in turn with the basic organization of primate social groups, their internal relationships, infant development, sexual behaviour, social dominance, and the vexed questions of the adaptiveness of primate behaviour and its relevance to the origins of human behaviour. All of the fundamental issues of concern to those conducting research into primate behaviour are at least mentioned and a number of special topics, such as those of primate tool-use and acquisition of "language" by great apes, are briefly reviewed.

The comprehensive coverage, allied with Chalmers's careful attention to definition of terms and logical explanation of research methods, makes the book very useful as an undergraduate text. The bibliography is up to date and well selected, and includes most of the key papers currently requisite for background reading. There are a few minor shortcomings, as in the failure to discuss adequately the problems of genetic control of behaviour, and in the over-concentration on Old World monkeys and apes with scant attention to New World monkeys and prosimians; but these to some extent reflect the stated aim of the book is that of providing a guide to major concepts in the study of primate behaviour rather than giving an exhaustive review of the topic. Chalmers has

generally succeeded in his task. Above the undergraduate level, the book is also a useful reference source for those topics which are dealt with most comprehensively, namely, developmental aspects of social behaviour, primate sexual behaviour, and the manifestations of social dominance. In all of these areas, Chalmers effectively reviews different approaches to research, and the current consensus views.

The study of primate social behaviour has now reached a phase of considerable interest, in that the largely descriptive field studies and somewhat disconnected laboratory studies of earlier years are gradually becoming related to a genuinely synthetic theoretical framework. This framework is emerging because of a variety of relatively recent developments, such as increased attention to quantification both in the field and in the laboratory; the examination of population-oriented field studies; consideration of "reproductive strategies" and their relationship to both individual and kin selection; increased emphasis on feeding behaviour and its relationship to overall energetic budgets; and the integration of behavioural observations with physiological studies of various kinds. In *Social Behaviour in Primates*, Chalmers quotes examples illustrating all of these trends, but in the end it is not clear that there is an overall synthesis, despite the identification of individual theoretical advances. It is perhaps too early to expect a proper synthetic treatment of primate social behaviour, and we may have to wait a few more years for this. But this book, along with a number of others published in recent years, at least points us in the right direction.

R. D. Martin

R. D. Martin is reader in physical anthropology at University College London.

Pleistocene paradise

The Ecology and Conservation of Large African Mammals
by S. K. Etringham
Macmillan, £15
ISBN 0 333 23580 0

The scientific study of large African mammals has a very recent history. Until 25 years ago, these spectacular animals had hardly a scientific paper to their credit, although their heads were hung in profusion everywhere as hunters' trophies. It is to the permanent shame of British zoologists that they neglected for so long to explore this rich evolutionary diversity that lay at their doorstep in colonial Africa.

There were a few pioneers, of course, like C. A. W. Guggisberg in Kenya, a medical epidemiologist who devoted his outdoor activities to the study of lions. It was not until well after the last war, however, that research on the ecology and behaviour of the large terrestrial mammals really gained momentum. A major contribution to this new work was initiated by the establishment of the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Animal Ecology in Uganda in 1960. Dr Etringham was the director of this unit during the second five years of its existence. He has now written a book that is among the first to bring together our knowledge of Africa's Pleistocene paradise.

Etringham's book is written as a textbook for undergraduates but he also has in mind the value of making the book of interest to those with a more cursory contact with African habitats. Accordingly, it is written with a pleasant directness, lack of jargon, and very humour. There is a strong emphasis on the life-histories of animals—for example, on aspects of their social life and territoriality of food-getting, that underlie their ecology. Etringham loses no opportunity to dispel false or exaggerated notions about the interactions of animals. This is regarded as particularly appropriate in an introductory text for African students because most of them have been brought up in towns and villages where they have never seen any of the large wild mammals and, perhaps contrary to general suppo-

sition, have very little knowledge of them. Equally valuable is the author's ability to draw on his own research in the field. He is a pilot as well as a biologist and uses his experience to explain with great clarity the techniques of wildlife research, including sampling surveys and the counting of animals from the air. The interpretation of the information gained carries the conviction of participation.

There are some stumbling blocks. One is bang on page two where the reader is confronted by a large table that classifies the Ferrungulidae (a taxon with its super-order of systematic convenience not much used by ordinary people). In the sequel the author does not use it himself, however, and refers (on page 121) to the Caprines (sheep and goats) and Bovines (cattle) as if these categories are, in fact, sub-families. A few minor blemishes have escaped correction. To call both the mating season and the culling season the "breeding season" is confusing. Most artiodactyls are not monogamous but are polygynous (it is simply that they usually conceive at the first heat and so do not exhibit another). The word "fertile" is used in an uncommonly restricted sense: female mammals can be fertile even though they are only intermittently in a state to actually conceive. It is not correct that copulation is most likely to lead to conception if performed after ovulation. The optimum time for insemination is well before ovulation.

For more important than criticism of particulars, however, is to emphasize the contribution that the book will make to the training of African ecologists (and others) in the conservation of the African fauna. These two objectives are inseparable, as the recent waves of poaching in Kenya and Uganda have shown. Well-managed reserves linked with wildlife research are an essential but fragile asset. Despoilment and war have done two decades of careful advance in Uganda, but the damage can be repaired. The security of Africa's great beasts lies in education.

Peter Jewell

Peter Jewell is professor of the physiology of reproduction in the University of Cambridge.

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BOOKS

The need for freedom to operate

Mate and Stalemate: working with marital problems in a social services department

by Janet Mattinson and Ian Sinclair
Blackwell, £9.00
ISBN 0 631 11821 7

Growing Up in Care
by Barbara Kahan
Blackwell, £12.00 and £3.95
ISBN 0 631 12171 4 and 12161 7

Creative Social Work
edited by David Brandon and Bill Jordan
Blackwell, £9.00 and £3.25
ISBN 0 631 11814 4 and 11841 1

Children, Grief and Social Work
by Gill Lonsdale, Peter Elfer and Rod Ballard
Blackwell, £9.00 and £3.25
ISBN 0 631 12191 9 and 12181 1

Social work academics frequently meet two forms of criticism. Within the senior common rooms, sociologists jeer at social work's lack of theory, while outside, directors of social service departments complain that courses are too theoretical and not geared to practice.

Jeon Packman and Bill Jordan have now initiated a series of books, entitled "The Practice of Social Work", weighted towards the description of practice not theory. The first four volumes reviewed here differ from each other in form and content. *Mate and Stalemate* by Janet Mattinson and Ian Sinclair narrates a three-year action project. A private agency, the Institute of Marital Studies, placed several of its caseworkers in a local authority with the objective of enabling its social workers to cope with the marital problems of clients. Using therapeutic techniques drawn from

psychoanalytic teaching, they worked with 68 cases.

The second volume, *Growing Up in Care*, is by Barbara Kahan who was head of a children's department before it was taken over by the social service department. She called together 10 people who had spent substantial parts of their lives in public care, and over a number of discussions, they air their views on life in foster and children's homes.

Creative Social Work is a collection of essays drawn together by David Brandon and Bill Jordan. Concerned that the stereotype of a social worker is of a "reasonable, dull, smiling sponge", they attempt to demonstrate that social work can be exciting and creative. The subjects of the 10 contributions include work with delinquents, deprived children, prisoners, and the mentally ill. All are well written and combine humour with seriousness, humility with confidence.

The fourth book, *Children, Grief and Social Work*, has three sections. Gill Lonsdale describes her work with parents facing the births and deaths of handicapped children, then Peter Elfer pinpoints the stresses of a family when a child has leukaemia, and Rod Ballard writes about the birth of his own Down's syndrome child.

If this series is to promote good practice, social workers will want to know whether these studies show social work to be of any use. If so, consideration has then to be given to how the social services can be best organized in order to facilitate such work. Over the past five years, social work's usefulness has been subjected to savage attacks. On the surface *Mate and Stalemate* will be a gift for the critics. It tends to use that language which so annoys outsiders, and some of the interpretations of behaviour will raise guffaws as well as eyebrows. Thus a client who knocks over a fire extinguisher sees it "as the psychological equivalent of a grenade hung up on purpose by the department to injure its clients. More important, the study fails to produce any statistical evidence to show any improvement occurred in the cases studied; marriages that

were improved, children not brought into care, families functioning better.

Instead, it concludes lamely, "As for the outcome, it must already be clear that we cannot write about 'cure'... we believe we helped some of them to become less destructive... Such changes did not necessarily mean that our clients started to get on better. None of the detailed studies do throw light on the mechanics of family disharmony, and these social workers must be commended for accepting those most difficult and worrying cases which other professions have not only failed to help but which they have tended to reject.

The accounts of those who had been brought up in care throw up many instances of trauma, and some examples of unnecessary suffering, but the consensus of *Growing Up in Care* is one of gratitude to social work. The children recognized the drawbacks of institutional care, yet still one boy took away a piece of the wall as a remembrance, and a girl who had many battles grew up to say: "I've great pride in pointing out that's where I used to live." They all shared the confidence that they could depend on the child care officers, that they would achieve, and that they valued officers who stood by them over many years. In times of change and turbulence, the children's department gave them some sense of security.

The papers in the other two books tell a different story. Some are frankly depressing, concerning social workers who battle against overwhelming odds in the inner city, or frustrated by bureaucratic madness or are foiled by entrenched attitudes. These social workers, let alone their clients, must wonder if social work is worth while. Fortunately, other papers sparkle with hope and achievement. The *Social Work* Noel Davies tells how he managed, against all the odds, to move patients out of a mental hospital and into the community. Within a large social services department, Gwen James succeeded in carving out a special unit to care for children in long-term care. She then used her own house to take children in during crises and

found homes for the delinquent, the aggressive, the neurotic and so on. In *Children, Grief and Social Work*, social workers are seen offering sensitive help to stricken and grieving parents.

From these books three features associated with good practice can be identified. First, workers in these cases were allowed to specialize. Those who had been brought up in care related to officers who had built up expertise in child care, not ones whose duties were spread thinly over a wide range of clients. Second, the creative social workers either won for themselves, or were given the freedom to operate, to develop their own skills and ideas. Noel Davies comments that his post was shared between two departments so that bureaucracies, consequently, he was free to concentrate on his objectives. Third, these social workers experienced a closeness with their clients. In contrast to the detached professionalism once popular in social work many of these workers were geographically and emotionally close to their clients. They saw and knew them outside of the office and hence were more fitted to help.

If the social services are to encourage the positive social work lauded by Packman and Jordan, then they must promote specialization, freedom to operate and closeness to clients; no easy task for mammoth social service departments with universal duties, problems of bureaucracy and limited resources. However specialization is possible under the generic umbrella as Gwen James shows in her contribution, and the signs are that some departments are moving in this direction. Giving social workers freedom to develop and to grow close to their clients is harder to achieve. My own experience suggests that the best chance occurs when social workers function in small geographical areas and live near or on their patch.

Robert Holman

Robert Holman is a community social worker with the Church of England Children's Society and was formerly professor of social administration at Bristol University.

Doing time

British Prisons
by Mike Fitzgerald and John Blackwell, £9.00 and £2.95
ISBN 0 631 11211 1 and 11212

When the May Committee was set up to examine the United Kingdom prison system in November 1976, the authors of this book decided on a preemptive strike—a "pre-introduction" to British prisons, providing an alternative view of official accounts such as *Prison and the Prisoner*, William A. J. Rees, *Prisoners in the UK*, and *150 pages* it attempts to present a systematic, if somewhat account of prison systems in England and Wales, and Scotland. Although Scottish material is included, the distinction between the two systems is not always clear, and occasionally Scottish descriptions are given in such a way as to relate to England.

The main chapter on the organization of the prison system is a collection of what might be called a prisoner's guide to the prison system, and the politics of imprisonment. The book begins, however, by claiming the "crisis" in British prisons. This is seen to be the official deviation to some extent, and the authors attempt to explain the reasons for the crisis. Over half had been rehoused in one or other of the large peripheral council estates. An obvious question is why so few people still lived in the district. One explanation is that the density was greatly reduced by the redevelopment. The intention was to reduce the population to not much more than a third of what it was, and this

was achieved: 3,500 compared with nearly 10,000 before. But, quite apart from this necessary overspill, a sizeable proportion of the residents had not wanted to stay anyway.

One of the biggest doubts that had been expressed about redevelopment was its effect on kinship ties. In introducing their findings, Coates and Silburn devote some attention to the study carried out by Michael Young and myself in the mid-1950s and reported in *Family and Kinship in East London*. The conclusion of that book, as the report was, that the planning activities of the local authorities were damaging family and community life in inner city districts like Bethnal Green—and, by extension, St Ann's. The surprise of this new study is that the proportion of former St Ann's residents who had relatives living nearby rose from just over half in 1958 to four fifths in 1976. Contact was correspondingly greater as well, so that "among the 1976 re-housed sample there are now many more, rather than fewer, family contacts than there had been in the wider sample we spoke with ten years before".

Part of the explanation lies in the fact that St Ann's had already been grossly deteriorated when the earlier study was carried out. As Coates and Silburn say, "By the early 1950s, and indeed well before then, St Ann's had fallen into an unhappy state... both in the physical sense of continuous decay, and in the social sense of a diminishing reputation and status." It is clear too that the local authority, as the major owner of residential property in Nottingham,

has played a crucial part in strengthening the extended family. Some people had earlier moved out of St Ann's to council estates and when others were given the opportunity of rehousing, many of them chose to follow their relatives. Even when vacancies were not immediately available people were, through exchanges, often able to move near to relatives at a later stage. Thus the existence of a sizeable stock of local authority housing (which will be reduced by the current policy of council house sales) can make it easier, rather than more difficult, for people to live near their kin if they wish to do so. In this sense *Beyond the Bulldozer* overturns one of the conclusions of *Family and Kinship in East London*.

Two qualifications need to be added. It may well be that a large stock of council housing can be used in the beneficial way described in a city the size of Nottingham; it seems unlikely that extended families can be re-formed with such ease in a large conurbation like Liverpool or London. The second qualification is that the old St Ann's had gone too far downhill to allow a sensitive and sympathetic reconstruction of the district. Though this book comes up with very different findings from what might have been expected, it also suggests that communities might have been saved in inner areas all over Britain.

If the message from Bethnal Green had been heeded in time.

Peter Willmott

Peter Willmott is director of the Centre for Environmental Studies in London.

BOOKS

Knocking things down

Beyond the Bulldozer
by Ken Coates and Richard Silburn
Nottingham University Department of Adult Education, £1.95
ISBN 0 902301 43 0

In 1976 Coates and Silburn returned to St Ann's, the Nottingham inner city district where, with a group of adult students, they had carried out their research on poverty and other issues in the late 1950s. The old St Ann's—a mixture of slum houses, cobbled streets, shops, factories and workshops—had been due for comprehensive renewal by the council, and the subject of the new study is the redevelopment.

This small book is a useful account of the process and its consequences. It describes the frequent changes in plans; it shows how bewildering the process was for most local residents, and how little influence they had over what was done. Its main interest is in the effects of redevelopment on family and community life.

Of the re-interviewed families (41 out of the earlier sample of about 400), most had moved out of the district. About a quarter were living in the redeveloped St Ann's, a few of them in their former homes. Some of the others lived in other areas of the city. Over half had been rehoused in one or other of the large peripheral council estates. An obvious question is why so few people still lived in the district. One explanation is that the density was greatly reduced by the redevelopment. The intention was to reduce the population to not much more than a third of what it was, and this

Prescribing for the health service

Health Care—priorities and management
by Gwyn Reyan, Harold Copeman, John Ferrin and Rachel Rosser
Croom Helm, £16.95
ISBN 0 7099 0093 7

The authors' aim is to suggest ways of making realistic and responsible decisions to be taken for achieving the effective use of resources for health care. Given their impressive pedigree, such ambitious aims are not necessarily misplaced. But are they successful? The overall level of public expenditure on health care is rising, but the benefits of the book for the potential reader likely to be out of the fairly hefty text?

The book has emerged as part of a research study for the Royal Commission on the NHS and to detect the influence that it had on some of the commission's findings. The early chapters provide a lucid, detailed and readable description of the NHS in terms of its history and current

importance for all social workers to consider. No amount of wishful thinking can eradicate the poverty, authority and responsibility vested in them; particularly if they work in government, agencies. Payne seeks to help them understand the nature of these features of their role and the freedom for manoeuvre which they possess in practice; often, he suggests, far greater than they are aware of.

In this first part of the book he discusses social work's position in social services departments. He is helpful when considering the contrasting perspectives of social work and welfare, the practice of social work, the theoretical underpinnings and community loyalty. The chapters dealing with large organizations and local government are much less satisfactory, being somewhat superficial and repetitive. Definitive assertions are made without supporting evidence and in a prescriptive tone that is, in varying degrees, unfortunately characteristic of the entire book. Case illustrations are few in number, a significant deficiency in a work that is so concerned with promoting good practice.

Apert from a short concluding section reviewing the main themes, the remainder of the book is about practising social work in social services departments. Malcolm Payne, who is basically optimistic about the future of social work, is not so concerned with promoting good practice.

John Haines

John Haines is a social work education adviser for the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work.

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Who reads a social policy yearbook?

The Year Book of Social Policy in Britain 1978
edited by Muriel Brown and Sally Baldwin
Routledge & Kegan Paul, £11.95
ISBN 0 7100 0394 3

1978 was not an easy year. Indeed, as the editors of this yearbook acknowledge, it was "positively dreary". A tail-end Labour Government struggled in deepening economic gloom. In the social policy field, reviews, inquiries and reports appeared on the market—the fruit of more vigorous initiatives in somewhat brighter days. The fate of their recommendations was, as a consequence, more than usually uncertain.

The selection reproduced in this publication is a fair cross-section of the DES review of the Supplementary Benefit system, the work of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, and the sparring events at Normansfield Hospital, where of more than 100 patients, more than 200 had been admitted.

The dominant themes are significant. Unemployment has returned unequivocally to the centre of the stage of academic attention, along with a general concern to relate policy to wider issues, while seeking to rescue social policy from its subservience to economic management. For policy, for reasons allied to already the dominant feeling is one of ill-mannered foreboding. If Frank Field and Christopher Pond are right in their close-packed argument that poverty is relatively a problem of low pay, it augurs ill for the poor in a period of economic contraction and inflation.

John Brown's disturbing discussion of the inquiry into Normans-

field Hospital for the mentally handicapped provokes uncomfortable presentations of a different kind. A comparison with Richard Crossman's comments on the Ely Hospital affair a decade ago produces a sense of déjà vu, of a chilling realization that nothing has happened to make one confident such incidents will not recur in a service which has such low priority, politically.

Planning, priorities, selectivity, rationing and all-growth are the words reverberating around the staff, rooms and committee tables of social service departments. The contributions by June Stevenson and Aigle, looking back over the 10 years since the publication of the Seabrook report, both derive their impetus from the "off" of the talk of cuts, social workers are only just getting to grips with the implications of the end of a decade, the first half of which saw a phenomenal 50 per cent growth in real expenditure. Yet the realization has dawned that this is not a bad dream from which tomorrow we will wake. Aigle's chapter is, for my money, the best in the book. He explores the relationship between the overall allocation of resources in the personal social services ("strategic priorities") and their implementation in day-to-day service delivery ("operational priorities"). In so doing he identifies the important and fascinating variations that have developed between departments. The topic lies at the heart of social policy and this paper will be useful to anyone concerned with resource allocation between central and local government.

The other paper with implications for the future of social work is Ian Shaw's lecture in social work at University College, Cardiff.

considerable beyond its immediate frame of reference is David Bill's detailed account of the experiment in open government which accompanied the publication of *Social Assistance*. The essay raises a string of questions about the future of open government, the possible shift of social service departments to a last resort safety net role, and the sustaining of the precarious balance between creative and proportional justice.

But who reads a *Yearbook of Social Policy*? More important, who is in touch with the issues under debate? If my quiz of 25 post-graduate social work students is anything to go by, the answer is discouraging. The majority of topics in this book were more or less beyond their knowledge. Most knew about the Seabrook Report and the Youth Opportunities Programme (the subject, incidentally, of a disappointing contribution), a third of them had heard about Normansfield, and rather fewer had some idea about the real experience of the patients. On the other hand, many of them dealt with in these pages, an almost complete ignorance, resigned.

What conclusions one draws from this I am not sure. Lack of knowledge about the issues under debate is a pity, but it cannot be argued with lack of acquaintance. Yet perhaps it does point to the need for a more sustained attempt to debate the issues with less of an eye for academic posterity. That, and a cheaper format, would help ensure that these annual volumes presented in these annual volumes.

Ian Shaw

Ian Shaw lectures in social work at University College, Cardiff.

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BOOKS

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- Lecturer in Entomology.
- Lecturer in Pastoral Agronomy and Range Management.

3. Rural Development

- Lecturer in Biochemistry/Nutrition.
- Senior Lecturer/Lecturer in Extension and Rural Sociology.

Salary scales: Senior Lecturer £3,500-£8,000 p.a., Lecturer £3,500-£6,500 p.a. (£1 starting equals K1.84). In very limited cases, the British Government may provide salary supplementation in range £3,288-£5,736 p.a. (starling) (reviewed annually and normally tax-free) and associated benefits. Family passages; baggage allowance; superannuation scheme; unfurnished accommodation; various allowances. Detailed applications (2 copies) including curriculum vitae and naming three referees should be sent by airmail not later than 15 April, 1980 to Personnel Secretary, University of Malawi, P.O. Box 278, Zomba Malawi and must be returned to him by 3 April, 1980. Applicants resident in U.K. should also send 1 copy to Inter-University Council, 90/91 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 0DT. Further details (but NOT forms) are obtainable from either address.



Department of Mechanical Engineering

Applications are invited for two lectureships in the Department of Mechanical Engineering for graduates with engineering degrees and experience in teaching and research.

Post 1: Plasticity & Fracture Mechanics OR Applied Mechanics and Dynamics

Post 2: Engineering/Industrial Metallurgy

Candidates for Post 1 should be professionally qualified graduate Mechanical Engineers with recent industrial experience.

Candidates for Post 2 should be professionally qualified graduates in physics or industrial materials with recent industrial experience.

The appointments will be made on a full-time basis for a period of five years, renewable on the basis of satisfactory performance.

Further particulars may be obtained from Dr A. S. Cooper, The University, Southampton SO9 5NH, please state in which post you are interested.

Applications should be sent to the above address, quoting reference 249/A/TES.

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Applications should be sent to the above address, quoting reference 249/A/TES.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

Applications are invited for the following posts, to be filled by 1 September, 1980:

FISHERIES TRAINING

- OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE INSTITUTE OF MARINE RESOURCES (Post 00/10)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Applications are invited for the following posts, to be filled by 1 September, 1980:

EDINBURGH

THE UNIVERSITY

LECTURESHIP IN CANADIAN STUDIES

The University wishes to appoint a Lecturer in Canadian Studies to a three-year period, renewable on the basis of satisfactory performance.

The Lecturer will be expected to teach and conduct research in Canadian Studies, and to contribute to the development of the Department of Canadian Studies.

Further particulars may be obtained from the Department of Canadian Studies, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 8JH, Scotland.

Applications should be sent to the above address, quoting reference 249/A/TES.

Further particulars may be obtained from the Department of Canadian Studies, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 8JH, Scotland.

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Universities continued

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
BARBADOS

Applications are invited for the following posts, to be filled by 1 September, 1980:

EDINBURGH

THE UNIVERSITY

LECTURESHIP IN CANADIAN STUDIES

The University wishes to appoint a Lecturer in Canadian Studies to a three-year period, renewable on the basis of satisfactory performance.

The Lecturer will be expected to teach and conduct research in Canadian Studies, and to contribute to the development of the Department of Canadian Studies.

Further particulars may be obtained from the Department of Canadian Studies, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 8JH, Scotland.

Applications should be sent to the above address, quoting reference 249/A/TES.

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Fellowships continued

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
**INSTITUTE OF MODERN
 LITERATURE RESEARCH
 FELLOWSHIP**
 Applications are invited from persons holding good honours degrees in the following fields: English Literature, American Literature, Canadian Literature, British Literature, European Literature, and the History of the English Language. The Fellowship is for one year, starting in September 1980, and is renewable for a second year. The salary is £10,000 per annum, plus a small maintenance allowance. Further details and application forms are available from the Director of the Institute of Modern Literature Research, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN. Closing date: 15 April 1980.

Polytechnics

The Polytechnic of Wales
POLYTECHNIC CYMRU
 Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
 Applications are invited for the following posts:

RESEARCH FELLOW

To work on a project investigating the interactive effects between power electronic converters and load acid batteries. The successful applicant should have an Honours Degree or equivalent in Electrical Engineering, or an appropriate Science Degree.
 Salary up to £20,000 depending upon qualifications and experience.
 Informal enquiries should be directed to Dr M. Jones, Lecturer, at 0457 405185, extension 1532.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

To work on a microprocessor-based instrument for dynamic systems testing using multi-frequency signals.
 Candidates should have an Honours Degree or equivalent in Electrical Engineering, or an appropriate Science Degree.
 Informal enquiries should be directed to Dr M. Jones, Lecturer, at 0457 405185, extension 1532.
 Applications should be sent to the Assistant Director (Staffing), The Polytechnic of Wales, Polytechnic, Mill Glamorgan, Cardiff, CF1 1AB.
 Closing date: March 24, 1980.

PLYMOUTH POLYTECHNIC

Learning Resources Centre

CHIEF CATALOGUER

Salary: £5,721 to £8,090

To coordinate cataloguing, classification, and indexing, and to participate in the development of an automated cataloguing system. A graduate with a professional library qualification and appropriate academic library experience, preferably working with an automated system.

Application forms for the above post will be returned by Friday, March 29, 1980, can be obtained with further particulars from the Personnel Officer, Plymouth Polytechnic, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA.

LONDON

THE POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

LECTURER IN COMMUNICATIONS

Salary: £10,128 to £11,253 p.a.

A vacancy will exist from September 1980 for a Lecturer in the Department of Communications. The successful candidate will be responsible for teaching and supervising students in the field of communications. The post is full-time and involves a significant amount of research. The salary is £10,128 to £11,253 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. Further details and application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, The Polytechnic of Central London, 100 Broad Street, London EC2A 4PU. Closing date: 29th March 1980.

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NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE POLYTECHNIC
COMPUTING SERVICES
DEPUTY HEAD OF COMPUTING SERVICES

Applications are invited for the above post of Deputy Head of Computing Services. Duties of this new post will include the day-to-day management of computing services at one group of Polytechnic sites (Stoke or Stafford) and assistance with Computing Services administration. The Deputy Head will also undertake teaching and tutorial work on computer management and related topics.

Salary scales:

PRINCIPAL LECTURER GRADE £8,250-£9,182 (bar) £10,382

USER SERVICES MANAGER

Applications are invited for the above post of User Services Manager. Duties will include: Responsibility for day-to-day management of the applications and advisory team of Programmer/Analysts. Liaison with all Polytechnic departments on computer access and applications for teaching and administration. Teaching and tutorial work on computer applications.

Salary scales:

SENIOR LECTURER GRADE £7,092-£8,280 (bar) £8,871

Further particulars and application forms for both posts from the Deputy Director (Staffing), North Staffordshire Polytechnic, College Road, Stoke on Trent ST4 2DE.

Leicester Polytechnic

FACULTY OF ART AND DESIGN

HEAD OF SCHOOL OF GRAPHICS

(Post No. 55)

The School is a constituent of one of the largest Faculties of Art and Design in the country. The Head is an academic leader concerned with the planning and teaching of first and second degree courses in graphic communication, in a School which has developed strong links with industry and the professions. Applicants will be expected to have experienced a successful academic and professional career and in addition will be conversant with the theories and philosophies of graphics as related to contemporary society.

Salary: £10,128 - £11,253 p.a.

Application form and further particulars available from

Staffing Officer, Leicester Polytechnic, P.O. Box 143, Leicester, LE1 9BH.

Tel. (0533) 551551 ext. 2301.

COVENTRY

LANCASHIRE POLYTECHNIC

DEPARTMENT OF OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

PRINCIPAL LECTURER

Salary: £10,128 to £11,253 p.a.

A vacancy will exist from September 1980 for a Principal Lecturer in the Department of Operational Research. The successful candidate will be responsible for teaching and supervising students in the field of operational research. The post is full-time and involves a significant amount of research. The salary is £10,128 to £11,253 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. Further details and application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, Lanchashire Polytechnic, Preston, Lancashire PR1 2QY. Closing date: 29th March 1980.

LONDON

THE POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

LECTURER IN COMMUNICATIONS

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Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education

ROEHAMPTON INSTITUTE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A federation of Digby Stuart, Froebel, Southlands and Whitelands Colleges

The Roehampton Institute of Higher Education is a federation of four Colleges, Digby Stuart, Froebel, Southlands and Whitelands, located within two miles of each other in South-West London. All teaching staff are appointed to the Roehampton Institute and each is assigned to one of the constituent Colleges. Though the courses and teaching are intercollegiate, the Roehampton Institute offers courses leading to degrees in the following fields: BA, BSc, and BEd degrees of the University of London which may be awarded at classified honours level, and BEd(Ord) and BEd(Hon) degrees. All degree courses offered by the Roehampton Institute are in combined studies and based on a unit system, so that each student follows courses in two subject areas. The Institute now seeks to make the following appointments. It is possible with effect from 1 September, 1980 —

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

Applicants will be expected to be of good standing in their own fields of academic interest and to demonstrate the ability to provide effective leadership in a Department (teaching courses at degree level) in the future development. The appointment in ENGLISH will be at Birmingham Hnd Grade VI (£10,260-£12,073) and the other appointments will be at Grade V (£10,128-£11,253). London Allowance £600 in all cases.

BUSINESS STUDIES

This is a field study of growing importance to the Institute. The Department is responsible for a wide range of joint degrees and also for initial and in-service education and training of teachers in Business Studies. Applicants should possess high qualifications in a discipline related to the work of the Department and; whilst previous experience in higher education would be an advantage, alternative management experience would be particularly valuable.

ENGLISH

HISTORY

MATHEMATICS

MODERN LANGUAGES

(With the exception of the PGCE courses the only language taught at present is French.)

MOVEMENT STUDIES

(This Department includes courses in Dance Studies and Physical Education.)

MUSIC

For further particulars and application forms please write (stating clearly the post for which application is made) to —

R. A. Fennell, Assistant Secretary, Roehampton Institute of Higher Education, Richardson Building, Digby Stuart College, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PH.

Closing date for receipt of applications: Friday, 11 April, 1980.

Bolton College of Education (Technical)

College affiliated to the University of Manchester.

A national and regional centre for the professional education and training of staff in further and higher education.

FACULTY OF TEACHING STUDIES

(Business, General and Social Studies)

LECTURER II/

SENIOR LECTURER

IN BUSINESS STUDIES CURRICULUM AND METHOD

A well-qualified and enthusiastic person is required to plan and participate in courses for in-training and serving teachers in post-compulsory education who are concerned with the teaching of Business Calculations, Statistics, Accounting and other numerical-based subjects in a Business Studies context. Salary Scale: £4,800-£8,871.

Application forms and further details are obtainable from the Senior Administrative Officer, Bolton College of Education (Technical), Chadwick St., Bolton BL2 1JW. Tel: 0204 22182.

Closing date for applications: 28th March, 1980.

SOUTH GLAMORGAN

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SENIOR TECHNICIAN

Salary: £10,128 to £11,253 p.a.

A vacancy will exist from September 1980 for a Senior Technician in the Department of Education. The successful candidate will be responsible for teaching and supervising students in the field of education. The post is full-time and involves a significant amount of research. The salary is £10,128 to £11,253 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. Further details and application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, South Glamorgan College of Education, 100 Broad Street, London EC2A 4PU. Closing date: 29th March 1980.

SOUTH GLAMORGAN

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SENIOR TECHNICIAN

Salary: £10,128 to £11,253 p.a.

A vacancy will exist from September 1980 for a Senior Technician in the Department of Education. The successful candidate will be responsible for teaching and supervising students in the field of education. The post is full-time and involves a significant amount of research. The salary is £10,128 to £11,253 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. Further details and application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, South Glamorgan College of Education, 100 Broad Street, London EC2A 4PU. Closing date: 29th March 1980.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

COUNTY COUNCIL

WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

TWO LECTURERS IN EDUCATION

Applications are invited for two posts in the field of Education. The successful candidates will be responsible for teaching and supervising students in the field of education. The post is full-time and involves a significant amount of research. The salary is £10,128 to £11,253 p.a. depending on qualifications and experience. Further details and application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, Wolverhampton College of Higher Education, 100 Broad Street, London EC2A 4PU. Closing date: 29th March 1980.

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Laurie Taylor



If anything, Little and Large seemed to be taking more pleasure than usual in their dreary programme. At this rate, thought Lapping, he might as well do off before half past eight and complete his *Dallas*, *Tales of the Unexpected*, *Much of the Day* and the first half of *Parkinson*. A Saturday evening wasted, five unsmoked cigarettes and an uncommenced bottle of Chianti Classico to wake up to on Sunday morning. Syd and Eddie were at it again. Was this what his old headmaster had meant last week about the refined life of a don? What was it? Ah yes, "The senior common room, the port, the conversation, the whole, the cerebral ambience."

"A little more claret my brave darling?" That would indeed be delightful, murmured Lapping, lifting his deep brown sensitive eyes from the March issue of the *New York Review of Books* and smiling across at his tall flaxen-haired Swedish wife Solveig who sat on the opposite side of the glowing fireplace following the score of Mahler's Sixth with a long elegant finger.

"Something is certainly needed to add a little piquancy to this polished but complex review by Edmund Leach of the two latest books on social mobility in Great Britain."

Solveig smiled as she delicately poured 1979 Chateau d'Aud. Are those the Goldsmith and Hailson volumes, my clever love? she asked with a slight toss of her long hair.

"A continuation of the Oxford Research Project on Social Stratification which has absorbed a major part of the issue of the Science Research Council's budget in the past 50 years?"

"Absolutely," agreed Lapping, fondling the tip of his ascetic jaw with a forefinger and allowing a slight pause from to cross his broad forehead as he leant back in the deep leather arm chair and awaited the next paragraph.

"A most welcome and unexpected Christmas present from a group of third year students to mark the publication of his recent monograph on Lacanian Structuralism."

"Is an important project which endeavours to generate in its separate ways our pattern of social mobility provide little grounds for the belief that we are slowly moving towards a more egalitarian society?"

"How admirable," said Solveig, quickly scribbling the half-read proof of her latest novel to make room on the coffee table for the warm claret.

"Indeed, indeed," agreed Lapping as the clock of the rustic garden gate announced the return of their son Gavriel from "hello practice." The festive air, the gentle and thoroughly anthropological questioning of their reliance on statistical generalisations and a reasoned comment on their failure to adequately confront the Marxist canon.

But surely, my own dear, isn't the word 'structuralism' a little bit too heavy for the fingers of her left hand, absently fondling the silky hair of Zolt the Afghan, isn't any empirical study of an essentially dynamic society likely to find itself bedevilled by a certain reductionism, what one might call a regression to an operational meaning, isn't it an unavoidable feature of a positivistic epistemology?

She smiled gently across at each other and allowed the echoes of the room to swirl in their ears, the scent of the chianti, the distant building of the coffee percolator, and the slowly emerging noise of Jimmy Hill, burbling enthusiastically about the goal of the night.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NELP: no prior consultation with academic staff

Sir, As past and present external examiners for the sociology degree at North East London Polytechnic we have been dismayed by proposals to close departments and reorganise the polytechnic. The proposals were formulated in the course of one weekend by an informally constituted working party, consisting of five members of the board of governors. The proposals were not based on information about the amount of money that had to be saved, nor on the fact that information is still not available. There has been no prior consultation with academic staff.

The substance of the proposals was released to the press before the polytechnic staff had been informed of them. The timing of the subsequent process of decision-making (culminating in a final decision to close departments and reorganise the polytechnic) was made by the board of governors, without any consultation with academic staff. The proposals were made by the board of governors, without any consultation with academic staff.

There are, thus, two days between the academic board meeting and the meeting at which the governors will make the final decision on the proposals. Furthermore, the governors will be making this decision before the joint education committee meeting, which will determine the polytechnic budget. The papers of the working-party recommendation, *inter alia*, the closure of the department of sociology and its courses. In the supporting papers no attempt whatsoever is made to justify this recommendation. Indeed, there is no discussion or argument of any kind which could lead to such a recommendation.

It is suggested in the plan that areas of minimal demand, and areas with present and forecast national decline in demand, must be critically reviewed. Present university income in the order of £250, and UCCA, in a press release of December, 1979, placed sociology within a static demand category. The grounds for supposing a rapid decline in current or future demand for sociology are therefore not clear.

A question of style

Sir, In Lisa Jardine's combative review of my book, *Literary Language from Chaucer to Johnson* (THES, 20 February 79), I was disappointed to find absolutely no reference at all to language. She appears to believe that the "fixed and formal definitions" of the classical rhetorical handbooks with regard to the three styles cannot be reintroduced without actual discussion of the handbooks. This is what the whole of my book was attempting to do: to show these levels of style can be shown to exist in many authors and that they do have a linguistic and a stylistic reality. Of course, this thesis is not new, and I have never suggested anything that it was. However, it is reasonable for a writer to try to make more explicit a well-established opinion by different methods. Certainly, I am indebted to Auerbach and I have, but I do not refer to them because they have almost nothing to say about language in the way I want to deal with it.

Miss Jardine is at liberty to scoff at the opinions of various authorities, or to remain silent and claim that she is not interested in the subject. But she is not at liberty to know that my views are a perfectly fair summary of a position also happens to disagree with strongly. I am using the ideas of Rorty to explain some aspects of stylistic change. I am not presenting a complete reassessment of the subject. Finally, I must say that I do not think Sidney is a Romantic writer because he writes earnestly and persuasively. He is a Romantic writer because he believes in the inherent and subjective nature of argument and method.

There may be many scholars who believe the study of historical style is complete now, and requires no further development. Should those people review books that deal with such subjects? I think not. Yours faithfully, A. J. GILBERT, School of English, University of Lancaster.

The plan also proposes that vocational and part-time courses should be preserved wherever possible. While the immediate vocationalism of a degree in sociology may not be as apparent as that of a degree in medicine, the course at NELP is not simply a pure sociology degree but, rather, explicitly combines sociology with vocational training in professional options—social work, personnel management, public administration, careers guidance, and social research. For many students their degree means a full professional qualification enabling them to enter professional careers. For others, the degree, together with the professional option, entitles them to exemptions from professional examinations. A recent survey of students carried out by the sociology department showed a clear relationship between the professional option chosen by students in their degree course and their subsequent occupation. The degree in sociology with professional studies at NELP is not, however, constrained by over-rigid concepts of vocation, but enables many students to enter worthwhile careers in the public sector and industry and commerce by offering placement experience in a wide variety of contexts.

The plan also appears to incorporate a principle that courses which are rare or unique should be retained, and again on the basis of this criterion, the distinctive structure of the sociology degree would certainly imply that it should not be discouraged. The opportunity to combine the study of sociology with professional training is highly valued by students, and prospective students as a reason for choosing the course.

In the light of the rationale upon which the polytechnics were founded, which stressed the importance of supporting and serving local communities, the closing of the department of the polytechnic which has taken note of this rationale should be threatened. The department has striven to recruit locally, particularly among "mature" students, and its closure would further local take-up; has encouraged students to obtain placement experience in the local area; has developed research programmes concerned with local issues.

Premature retirement

Sir, As one who has already agreed with his employers that in view of the general financial situation he should retire at 60, I was interested to see the discussion of the premature retirement scheme (THES, February 29). The desirability of such a scheme is obvious, and most of the advantages are mentioned by your contributors.

However, the conclusion that each institution should finance its own share of the scheme is clearly outrageous and is a particularly unrealistic burden on many smaller institutions (such as mine) which are members of the scheme. The proportion of staff eligible must be determined very widely between institutions. It is possible that the new universities of the 1960s will have few such cases, and some of the older ones may have rather a lot. Thus, whether any individual can take advantage of the scheme is a lottery. The ESST and USS schemes were designed nationally so as to even out the burdens. Given continued high rates of inflation, and index-linking of pensions, one could imagine a case where a percentage of staff would be able to take time pay a great deal for its 5/80th share of a pension, and if salaries continue not to be index-linked, the economy of retiring older members of staff may become doubtful.

I should also add that in our industry as in all others, these schemes require some back-up on other fronts if participants are to accept them readily. If the worker agrees to remain out of the labour market (and this is not a bad regulation, full-time employment and does not deny unemployment benefit), he or she should be able to do so for the appropriate pension age concessions from the Inland Revenue. Media reports suggest that the state pension will rise to £6.50 a week, and this is a good thing. But the concession would be an additively very small way of increasing the effective level of the private pension scheme. Given the salary level and other public sector benefits, it is not clear that the scheme is worth the cost.

Yours faithfully, J. M. GILBERT, School of English, University of Lancaster.

Current economic and technological problems make long-term planning difficult. But, proposals such as those advocated by the working party at NELP, and now backed by the policy and resources sub-committee, have long-term and irrevocable consequences. In the light of comments such as those of the Flinniston report about the perils of an over-rigid understanding of vocationalism, and stress upon the need for flexibility and innovation in graduates, the need for the social sciences seems ever more apparent.

The implications of the planning methods and principles underlying the proposed cuts at NELP are far-reaching. They are profoundly disturbing: not only for the four departments and two faculties under attack at NELP, but for all polytechnics and ultimately for the whole tertiary sector of education. Yours faithfully, NOEL PARRY, Head, Department of Sociology, Polytechnic of North London; BASIL BERNSTEIN, Professor of Sociology of Education, University of London; ROBERT MOORE, Professor of Sociology, University of Leeds; JANET WOLFE, Lecturer in Sociology, University of Leeds.

Sir, You report correctly (THES, March 7) that we have asked university sociology departments not to accept students wishing to transfer from NELP to degree courses elsewhere until the situation at the polytechnic is satisfactorily resolved. However, we have also written to the governors expressing our concern at the proposal to close this large and successful department. While we understand the problems posed by budgetary constraints, the demand nationally for places in sociology is buoyant throughout the country and we are not confident that a proper academic case has yet been made for this particular proposal.

Yours faithfully, JOHN WAKEFORD, Chairperson, British Sociological Association, 101 Oxford Street, London, WC2A 2RU.

Our benefits usually reserved for the over 65s would also help. Yours faithfully, Dr DAVID EVERSBY, Policy Studies Institute, 1/2 Castle Lane, London, S.W.1.

Sir, I would normally hesitate before taking issue with any of your contributors, but feel bound to point out that there were a number of inaccuracies in David Jobbins' article, namely: (1) The premature retirement (compensation) scheme officially came into operation on April 1, 1976—not 1977. (2) As yet, no statutory regulations (such as the Crombie scheme) have appeared. (3) The original "hand-out" for the scheme envisaged redundancy or lack of capacity as the possible reasons for early termination of service—voluntary retirement appeared as an option at local level. (4) As far as the Crombie scheme is concerned, the DRS has responsibility only for the staff of the voluntary colleges. Staff from colleges in the maintained sector remain the responsibility of local education authorities who have to accept all the administrative and most of the financial responsibilities relating to the scheme.

Yours faithfully, N. MCNAMIS, 18 Cromford Way, New Malden, Surrey. Sir, I write to correct a serious error in the article "Early retirement" in the answer to a question at local level. (4) As far as the Crombie scheme is concerned, the DRS has responsibility only for the staff of the voluntary colleges. Staff from colleges in the maintained sector remain the responsibility of local education authorities who have to accept all the administrative and most of the financial responsibilities relating to the scheme.

Yours faithfully, J. M. GILBERT, School of English, University of Lancaster.

A god-given right to public monies

Sir, "Too often, it is the 'humanists' to preach as if they were gods," wrote Kenneth Minogue (THES, 29 February 79). I am stuck in my craw, as he might say, that of any rational, humanist society, does he think his profession should be an exception to the rule of public monies? The implications of the planning methods and principles underlying the proposed cuts at NELP are far-reaching. They are profoundly disturbing: not only for the four departments and two faculties under attack at NELP, but for all polytechnics and ultimately for the whole tertiary sector of education. Yours faithfully, NOEL PARRY, Head, Department of Sociology, Polytechnic of North London; BASIL BERNSTEIN, Professor of Sociology of Education, University of London; ROBERT MOORE, Professor of Sociology, University of Leeds; JANET WOLFE, Lecturer in Sociology, University of Leeds.

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Yours faithfully, J. M. GILBERT, School of English, University of Lancaster.



New Printing House Square, London WC1X 8EZ. Telephone 01-837 1234

Tough thinking not rhetoric is needed to fight the cuts

Present gloom and future doom so preoccupy higher education these days that there is a danger that the present cuts in public expenditure on universities, polytechnics and colleges will be got out of proportion. This is not to suggest that the cuts are not a very real and serious threat to maintaining Britain's present very high academic standards and to extending Britain's far too limited opportunities for post-school education. It is simply an argument for fighting the spirit of the cuts as well as their substance—and the best way to do this is not to become totally obsessed by cuts to the exclusion of other, far more hopeful, subjects. To see the future of higher education entirely in terms of available resources is a narrow and materialist vision. It is to play the games according to rules devised by one's opponents who prefer to see higher education (and most of social policy) as an extra that cannot be afforded rather than as one of the foundations of a healthy culture and a civilised society, and an important contributor to the creation of national wealth.

The position of *The Times* on cuts is, we hope, clear. We oppose them. We do not accept that cuts are inevitable like some latter-day Black Death to which all publicly supported services must eventually succumb. But we do accept that the real constraints imposed by slow economic growth cannot be wished away and that higher education is not an intellectually respectable luxury which can be cut to the bone. The case for higher education is made for sustaining public expenditure as a whole.

These are very important qualifications. Opposing cuts is far from the same as opposing the need for cuts. The latter is a much more difficult task. It is a task which requires a high degree of intellectual honesty and a high degree of courage. It is a task which requires a high degree of intellectual honesty and a high degree of courage. It is a task which requires a high degree of intellectual honesty and a high degree of courage.

Yours faithfully, ANGELIA KUBAN, Institute of Dental Surgery, University of London.

Of course, public expenditure cannot be seen in isolation from economic policy as a whole. Looking back over the 1970s, the real damage to higher education has been caused by the indirect "cuts" of inflation, not by direct cuts whether imposed on the orders of the IMF or in harmony with Chicago economics. It is true of the present cuts. The reductions made in last year's budget and threatened in this winter's public expenditure White Paper are trivial compared to the threat of a cash limits squeeze.

Cuts by commission are not half as effective as cuts by omission

Twenty per cent inflation, therefore, has a far greater impact on the financial condition of higher education than programme cuts. The latter always seem to turn out to be less in practice than on paper, while the former screws up uncertainty to a pitch of near-paralysis which compounds the effect of the actual cuts. Cuts by commission are not half as effective as cuts by omission.

Higher education, like all publicly financed services, has vital interest not only in the level of public expenditure but also in that of inflation. Seen in this light the greatest criticism of the present Government's record is not that they have made cuts but that they have made them in a way which has done little to reduce inflation. The implication for opponents of the cuts is that as much attention should be paid to ways to bring down inflation (like an effective incomes policy) as to resisting the cuts. This might mean, in fact, far less dramatic action against the cuts, but it would mean a more realistic approach to the cuts.

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A soft option is a very tough option indeed. Those who are not prepared to accept the reality of these consequences should perhaps be less shrill in their opposition to cuts. From these three common failures: to see the cuts in proportion; to follow through rigorously the consequences of high public spending; and to identify properly which cuts are most damaging; can flow a fourth which is most damaging of all. This is the danger of immobility. Grim determination to do and the present system, war and all, against the threat of cuts may overwhelm the insatiable desire for innovation and the capacity for reform. There is a world of difference between accepting heavier teaching loads if the aim is to expand opportunities for students and a more favourable staff/student ratios imposed in order to save money. Similarly flexibility in working may be fine if it allows more mature students to be taught in evening classes but somewhat less if it is the prelude to some shot gun early retirement scheme.

But to reject all change is to succumb to the spirit of the cuts although it may have the appearance of fighting their substance. It will lead to an ever worsening atrophy which will make positive reforms more difficult to achieve when the financial climate improves. Model E and all that it stands for will require a great deal of flexibility in working practices. In financial arrangements, and, above all, in underlying attitudes, it is ever more difficult to achieve when the financial climate improves. Model E and all that it stands for will require a great deal of flexibility in working practices. In financial arrangements, and, above all, in underlying attitudes, it is ever more difficult to achieve when the financial climate improves.

An effective campaign against the cuts, therefore, must be based on reality not rhetoric. It must see them in proportion to the more than £2,000 a year that is spent on higher and further education. It must be based on a proper analysis of all the economic measures taken by the Government and so give a high priority to fighting inflation as to fighting the cuts. It must suggest a realistic way to bring down the courage to face the tough and perhaps unpopular implications of such a policy. Above all, it must fight against intervention. The worst possible reaction to the cuts would be for higher education to retreat into the shell from which it has so recently emerged.

The potential investment, even at current prices, in a man or woman given tenure in their twenties, would pay for the erection of a teaching block or laboratory. To put up a building requires lengthy and time-consuming consultation with architects, engineers, potential users, and a variety of other professionals. The critical decisions about where it will be, what it will look like, how it will be used take months and sometimes years. Yet still in some places, we cheerfully make appointments for life on the strength of a few decent papers.

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Fair play for the job market punters



William Taylor

Common room gossip generates a rich mythology about the processes of academic appointments. The job was fixed from the start. The advertisement was purely cosmetic. The application deadline was timed to ensure that only a favoured few could put in. The I.E.A. sent applicants a personal letter of rejection. The form that demands details of C levels. But it was fixed. The head of department had the chairman of the committee in his pocket. The only real choice was between which of the two internal candidates got it. Three hundred miles for 20 minutes!

The function of much of this talk is clearly to protect the egos of the unsuccessful. But it also reflects the strength of individual and social feeling aroused by the whole business of trading reputations, careers and personal status in the academic labour market.

Notwithstanding ego-defensive rationalizations, amplified by the ritualistic platitude of "smoke people for allegedly under-represented special interest groups, the academic job market in this country remains impressively open to talent. Is it too open? Does too much turn on the interview?

The bare bones of the formal procedures are familiar, and the flash that clothes them pretty well understood by both candidates and institutions. But there are still too many examples of unnecessary inconvenience and trauma for individuals, and inadequate efficiency on the part of institutions.

Judgments have also to be made, often on the basis of inadequate information, about the conditions and the prospects of whom one may be working. Not all professors and heads of department are purveyors of the art of drafting accurate and informative job descriptions. Their efforts are sometimes the despair of personnel officers.

Few conversations are more painful than those with former colleagues who have discovered within a term, a month, a week, even a day, of taking up a new post that they dislike everything and everybody about the place. Shades of those applicants who convince themselves even before the luggage comes down the chute at Montreal, Sydney or Auckland. For them, there is the next plane back to Britain. For academics, there is sometimes no way out.

Thus for individuals and institutions alike the risks involved in appointments decisions are greater than once they were. Everyone would gain from fuller and more carefully worked job descriptions, extended opportunities to look each other over in what is after all a mutual process of choice, two or three stage interviews with separate panels where appropriate, phased to allow impressions to be checked and rechecked, reviewed, and more attention given to the apparently minor but important matters of academic ledger applications, thanking referees, and notifying all those concerned of the outcome. There are few of us who could not do something to improve our selection and appointment procedures. It is imperative to do so if we are to obtain maximum benefit from the very limited amount of academic mobility possible in the years ahead.

the thoroughness of the North American "search." For the individual applicant, there is always more at stake than the few Xeroxed CVs and a 120 stamp that amateur career counsellors cheerfully assess as the price of entering the market. Mortgages, an inattentive or articulate children, are all familiar factors in the mobility. The stakes are lowest for the jobless without other ties, highest for those already in post and with family commitments.

Less often considered are the effects of being known among colleagues as "on the move." The expansionist myth held that this led to immediate interview with a chairman or dean, a heart-warming assertion of one's value to the department and an offer of early promotion or, at very least, several increments on the scale. Today's scenario is different. According to circumstances, the potential candidate can be cursed for creating a vacancy that will promptly be frozen or disestablished, or blessed for contributing to natural attrition and the survival of colleagues' positions. The mere fact of "punting" can itself lower rank in the collegial pecking order. Repeatedly to fail in external applications weakens the claim for internal consideration.

Even if there are no financial, domestic or collegial impediments to "having a go," there are still for many people personal costs of a kind they prefer not to pay.

'Not all professors and heads of department are possessed of the art of drafting accurate and informative job descriptions'

The potential applicant combs the columns for notification of suitable vacancies, sends for the detailed particulars, almost invariably offered; obtains referees' names to use their names, completes and dispatches the requisite forms or a suitable letter. And waits. Some times the silence is broken and hopes lifted when referees make it known they have been approached. Then, for the fortunate, the call to interview, sometimes preceded by an invitation to visit the department for informal discussions. In some places there are two interviews. In the course of a single day, a so-called long list becomes a short list, fewer sit down to lunch than took coffee, and the duck gathers without and the smoke thickens within, the survivors eye each other apprehensively across the tea-cups.

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